Days wrapped in school uniforms,
running around,
finding our own adventures,
finding wonderful fantasies
—because we're girls.

Edited & Designed by
SHIRO ENOMOTO

ファンタジーコミックス

紺野キタ

ひみつの階段 2

紺野キタ

階成社

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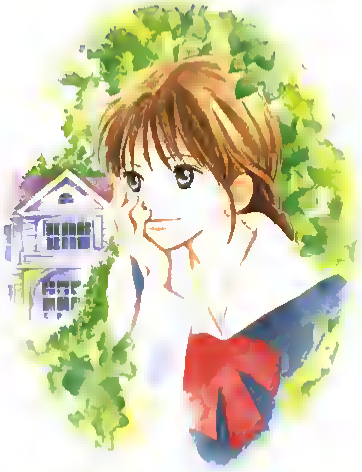

Endless conversations with our friends.
Reading poetry on nights when we can't sleep.
Throwing ourselves into faraway dreams.
Falling in love... Our time as girls
is a gift from God.

ひみつの階段 2

紺野キタ

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ひみつの階段 2

紺野キタ

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ポプラ社

The Secret Stairs

ひみつの階段

2

Konno Kita
紺野キタ

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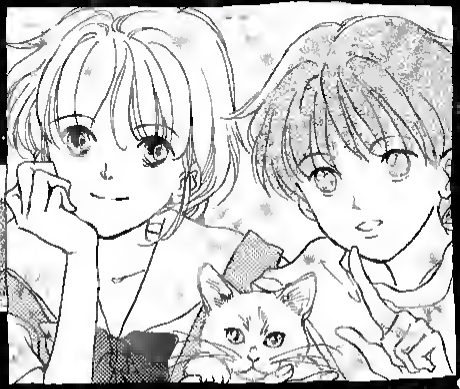


*"Kampyo" are strips of dried gourd. They can be yellowish-orange

SEE YOU NEXT TERM.
GOOD LUCK WITH SUMMER SCHOOL!
BYE, NACCHAN!
I HEARD SHE'S TAKING A SUMMER COURSE
I WONDER IF NISHIMURA-SEMPAI IS GOING HOME
Gotta bear with it a bit longer, eh
I have a little trouble with her
thud
—C'MERE, KAMPYO.
Meow
YEAH. TAKE CARE, NAO-CHAN.
NACCHAN.
KINA-CHAN.
WE'LL OVERCOME THIS TRIAL!!
hugging tight
Both taking make-up classes.
OH? MISHIMA?!
Tch They spotted me

THE DORMS MUST BE PRETTY EMPTY, HUH?
YEAH. I'M ALL ALONE IN MY ROOM NOW.
STAY IN THE DORMS OVER THE SUMMER FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER.
I'M HERE BECAUSE I WANT TO BE
DON'T ASSUME I GET LOW GRADES LIKE YOU.
THERE ARE A FAIR NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO
Ouch.
Everyone left so fast
I MIGHT GET A LITTLE LONELY.
DO NOT DISTURB!!
DID SOMEONE COME BACK?
I'M HOME!
.....

Marie's bed
creak
MARIE?
Mm.
MARI-...! WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR HAIR?!
YOU CUT IT ALL OFF?!
ARE YOU A FRIEND OF MARIE'S?
OH!
IS THIS YOUR ROOM?
A BOY
nod nod
IT'S
SHE NEVER MENTIONED SHE HAD A LITTLE BROTHER...
MARIE
HE LOOKS JUST LIKE HER.
OH! YOU MUST BE NATSU.
Am I right?

PLEASE BE GOOD TO ME!
I'LL BE FREELOADING HERE FOR A WHILE
FATHERS AND OLDER BROTHERS? YOU'RE MARIE'S..
COUSIN YOUNGER
Thr- that's not included in "fathers and brothers."
WHO ARE YOU? AND BOYS AREN'T ALLOWED HERE!
NOT EVEN FATHERS AND OLDER BROTHERS?
...HEY, WAIT A MINUTE!
OH, PLEASE BE GOOD TO ME T-...
bow
I'LL GO ASK MARIE TO COME AND GET YOU!
Hey, wait a minute!
OH! WAIT
RICHARD, WILLIAM, CHRISTOPHER..
Take your pick.
Hard to pick!
Oh, which should I choose?
DANIEL
ANYWAY, YOU--
Daniel?
YOU DON'T LIKE IT?
THEN...
Doesn't it sound like someone you could share a summer of romantic adventure with?
Adventure!? Gimme a break.
Address

JUST A FEW DAYS... THAT'S ALL I NEED.
PLEASE DON'T TELL MARI-CHAN.
I DON'T HAVE ANYWHERE ELSE TO GO.
CAN I STAY HERE?
OKAY. I'LL MAKE COFFEE.
DID YOU HAVE LUNCH YET?
HUH?!
OH. NO. I DID BUY SOME BREAD FROM A CONVENIENCE STORE, BUT...
... LUNCH.

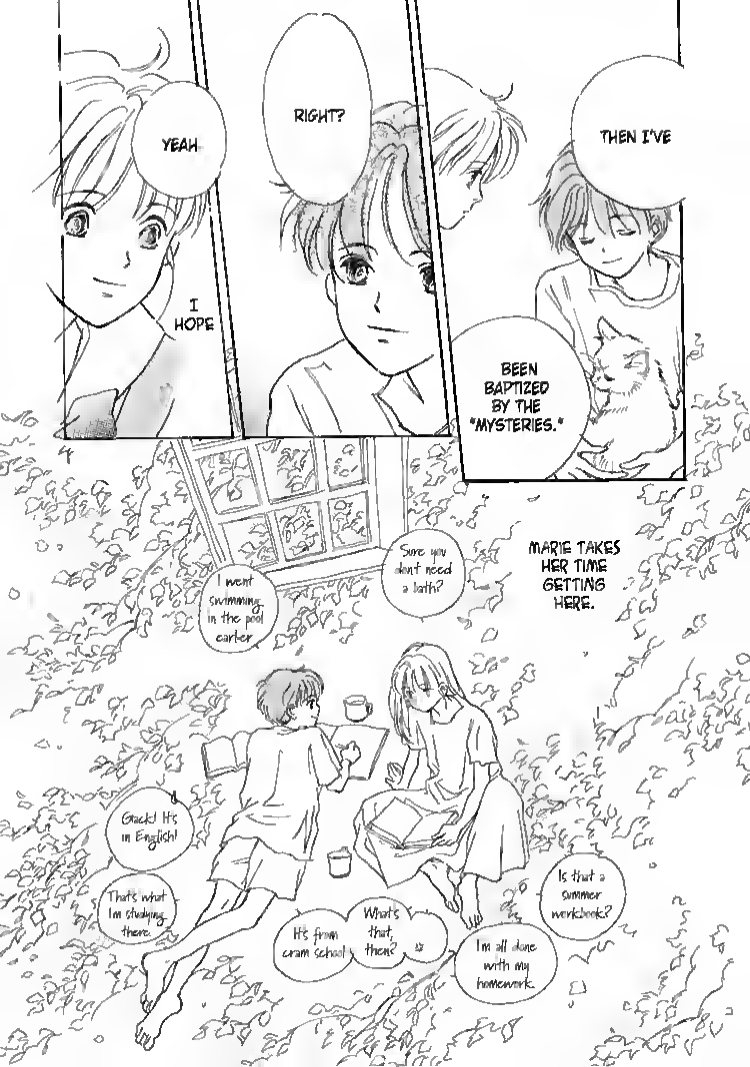
WHAT IF HIS PARENTS ASK THE POLICE TO SEARCH FOR HIM?
HE MUST STILL BE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.
TOUCHED, I ENDED UP AGREEING TO LET HIM STAY
OKAY, OKAY.
BE CAREFUL WHEN YOU LEAVE THE ROOM.
There's this annoying woman!
nag nag
BE SURE YOU DON'T STAND OUT.
WITH THAT HIGH VOICE.
Stomach-ache?
doom
Assisting a run-away.
This might be a crime.
Will he really be okay?
think calmly
tmp
tmp
tmp
NACCHAN!
HELLO.
You better treat me to something nice later
UGH, I SPRINTED. THEY SAID NOT TO MAKE AN ANNOUNCEMENT, SO...
.....
A PHONE CALL?

...I KNEW IT!
gasp
OH, SO HIS NAME IS KIYOSHI.
IS KIYOSHI THERE WITH YOU?
I'LL GET RIGHT TO THE POINT
MARIE!
OH, NATSU?
EEEEP!
...OH, CRAP
IT JUST SLIPPED OUT.
Please don't tell Mam-chan.
HE'S AT THE SHOUKA DORMS GUESS HE PUT SOME THOUGHT INTO IT.
FOUND HIM, AUNT SAEKO!
BUT, WELL, AT LEAST NOW HIS FAMILY KNOWS WHERE HE IS.
"AUNT SAEKO" MUST BE HIS MOM.
click
beep
boop
boop
boop
boop
ANYWAY, NATSU,
PLEASE MAKE SURE HE STAYS PUT UNTIL WE GET THERE.
WE'RE COUNTING ON YOU!
click
HUH?!
HEY ...

I CAN RELAX A BIT NOW...
SMACK
DONK
SMACK
DONK
NATSU!
WH-WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
I CAN'T GO BACK TO THE ROOM.
I WENT OUT TO GO SHOPPING,
?
AND WHEN I GOT BACK TO THE DORM,
IT WAS LIKE A LABYRINTH INSIDE--
I WALKED AROUND AND AROUND AND KEPT ENDING UP AT THE SAME SPOT.

START
I'LL BE YOUR GUIDE FOR THE HAUNTED HOUSE
Huh?!
Ghost
Ghost
YOU COULD SAY THAT, YES
It is haunted
IT WAS LIKE A HAUNTED HOUSE.
LOOK, WE'RE HERE.
GOAL
THIS DORM IS DEFINITELY WEIRD. THERE'S SOMETHING GOING ON.
I REALLY COULDN'T FIND IT BE--
URK!
OH, A CAT.
saunter
saunter
Meow

OH! YOU CAN SEE KAMPYO.
KAMPYO? GEEZ, WHAT A NAME.
YEAH I HEARD THAT STUDENTS CALLED HIM THAT WAY BACK WHEN, TOO.
YEAH. REALLY OLD.
WOW. HE MUST BE OLD, THEN.
LITTLE MYSTERIES ARE HIDDEN HERE AND THERE IN THESE OLD, OLD BUILDINGS
BUT THEY DON'T APPEAR FOR JUST ANYBODY
THAT GOES FOR KAMPYO, TOO

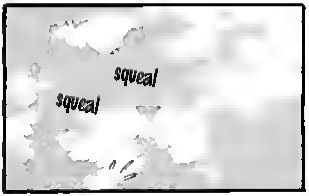

YEAH
I HOPE
RIGHT?
THEN I'VE
BEEN BAPTIZED BY THE "MYSTERIES."
I went swimming in the pool earlier
Sure you don't need a bath?
MARIE TAKES HER TIME GETTING HERE.
Gracks! It's in English!
That's what I'm studying there.
It's from cram school.
What's that, there?
I'm all done with my homework.
Is that a summer workbook?

DANIEL
Borrowing one of Nacchans Mouses
MISHIMA.
Daniel
BYE!
I HAVE CLASS NOW.
HEY. HEY!
WELL, IT'S NOT LIKE YOU NEED TO TAKE MAKE-UP CLASSES, SO ..
156cm
171cm
PLAY WITH DANIEL.
AH, I CAN REALLY FOCUS ON CLASS NOW
ding
dong
YOU SUCK.
GO GET THE BALL!

HEY, HOW FAR DID THE BALL...
TAKING A NAP?
OH?!
KAMPYO?
SO HE'S FRIENDLY WITH OUTSIDERS, TOO.
HUNH.
.....WE CALL HIM CARAMEL IN BUILDING A.
CARAMEL? NATSU CALLED HIM KAMPYO
Maybe each dorm has its own name for him.
Kampyo
LONG TIME NO SEE, CARAMEL. HOW'VE YOU BEEN?
TO PEOPLE WHO DON'T LIKE CATS
HE MAKES HIMSELF COMPLETELY INVISIBLE
He likes you

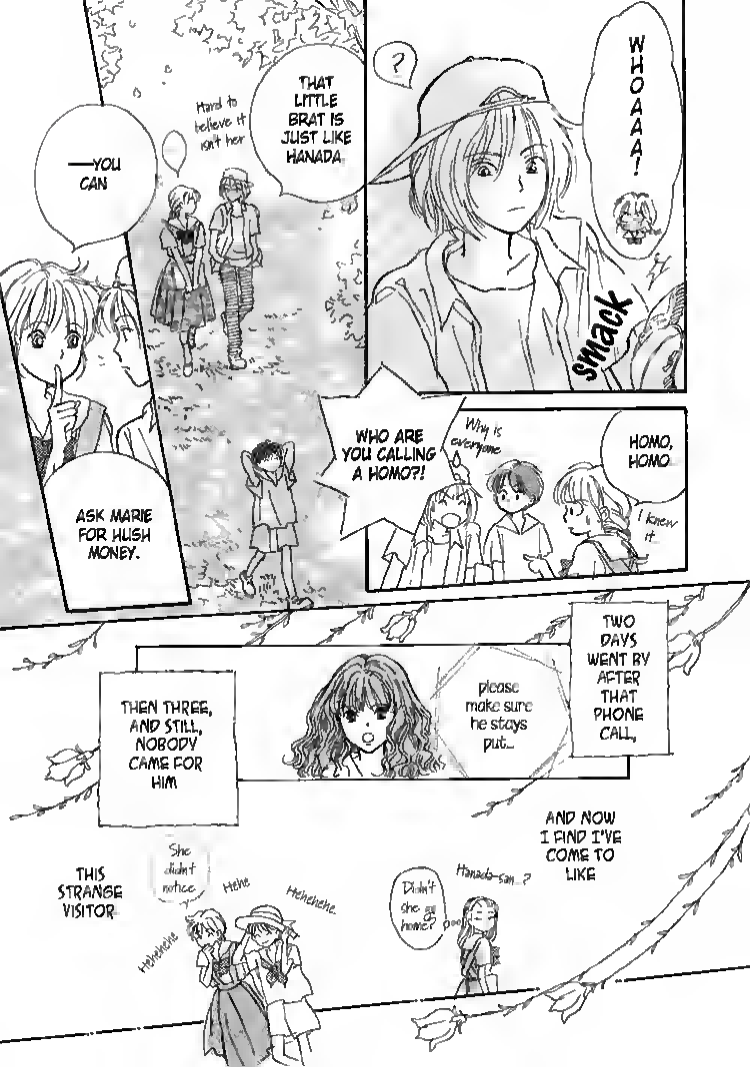
WHERE'S YOUR SWITCH?
Did you say Bro?
I'M GOING TO SHUT YOU OFF.
Oh? Are you mad?

YOUR NAME IS MUCH MORE "GIRLY CHIC," BRO.


squeal
squeal

NATSU!
whoosh

glance


WHOAAA!
?
smack
THAT LITTLE BRAT IS JUST LIKE HANADA
Hard to believe it isn't her
—YOU CAN
ASK MARIE FOR HUSH MONEY.
WHO ARE YOU CALLING A HOMO?!
Why is everyone
HOMO, HOMO
I knew it
TWO DAYS WENT BY AFTER THAT PHONE CALL,
please make sure he stays put...
THEN THREE, AND STILL, NOBODY CAME FOR HIM
THIS STRANGE VISITOR
She didn't notice.
Hehe
Hehehehe
Hehehehe
Didn't she go home?
Hanada-san...?
AND NOW I FIND I'VE COME TO LIKE

THIS WAY.
WHOA!
WE'RE A BIT REMOVED FROM THE CITY, SO YOU CAN SEE THE STARS BETTER HERE, DON'T YOU THINK?
YEAH.
THEY'RE AWESOME.
You're a kid. Don't be shy about taking stuff
You're a kid yourself a
THANKS.
IT'S NO PROBLEM, REALLY.
OH!
MEOOOW.
KAMPYO CAME ALONG TOO.

I'VE BEEN WANTING TO THANK YOU FOR A WHILE NOW.
NO, I MEAN--
Pet
Pet
Pet

IF THERE ISN'T ONE THERE, LET'S MAKE ONE!
LOOK, RIGHT THERE. STRAIGHT AHEAD.
giggle giggle
I HAVE NO IDEA WHICH ONE YOU MEAN.
"RIGHT THERE" DOESN'T TELL ME ANYTHING
CONNECT THAT ONE AND THAT ONE AND THAT ONE.
WHICH ONE?
chirp
chirp
chirp
NATSU!
MARIE!
WHERE'S KIYOSHI? IS HE HERE?
YEAH. I THOUGHT YOU'D BE HERE SOONER.
They really do look alike....

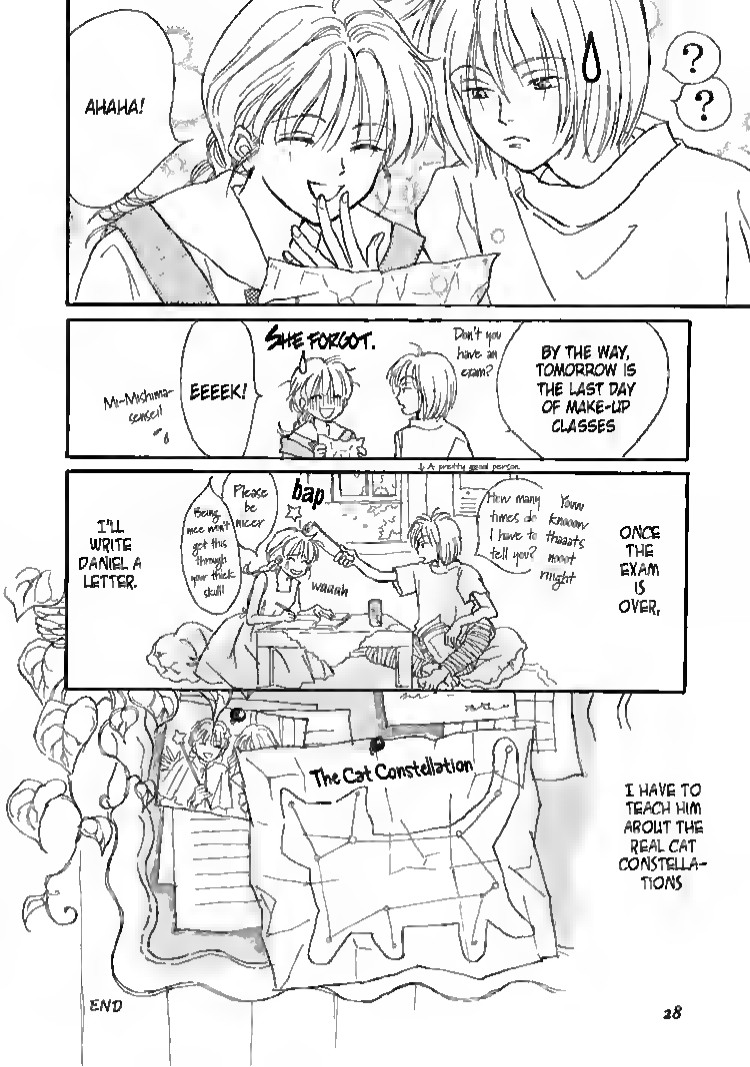
WE FIGURED WE SHOULD LET HIM HAVE HIS WAY FOR A BIT, SO HE'D GET OVER IT..
KIYOSHI!
LET'S GO HOME, KIYOSHI. AUNT SAEKO'S BEEN WORRIED TOO.
...YOU SAID YOU WOULDN'T TELL
YOU PROMISED!
TRAITOR!
KIYOSHI.

KAZAMA-SAN?!
HUH?! WHO WAS THAT BOY...?
gloom
tmp tmp tmp tmp tmp tmp
chk
WHAT'S ALL THIS NOISE?
I'VE LOST HIS TRUST.
I'LL NEVER GET IT BACK NOW.
slump
bang bang
Stop looking around and open this door!
bang
slam!
EEEEK!
I'M NOT ASKING. I DON'T NEED TO KNOW...
I told you to open this door!
bang bang
bang
DON'T TELL ME!
HE'S USUALLY A LITTLE TOO OBEDIENT, ACTUALLY... BUT YOU SEE, HIS FAMILY--
HE DOESN'T USUALLY TALK LIKE THAT.
SORRY

RE-OVER
I'M SORRY
I LET YOUR SEMPAI CATCH ME
I'M CAUSING TROUBLE FOR YOU

THE HAUNTED HOUSE GOT HER.
See?
bang
Open it dorn it!
bang
bang
SO IT'S FINE.
WE'RE ALL
ON YOUR SIDE.
purrr
purrr
purrr
purrr
purrr

HE'S GOING HOME?
YEAH.
DANIEL,
COME SEE US AGAIN SOMETIME!
DANIEL?
NATSU!
whoosh
EEK!
smack!
WHOA, THERE.
WHAT IS IT?
rustle
A LETTER?


AHAHA!
?
?
BY THE WAY, TOMORROW IS THE LAST DAY OF MAKE-UP CLASSES
Don't you have an exam?
SHE FORGOT.
EEEEK!
Mi-Mishima-sensei!
↓ A pretty good person.
ONCE THE EXAM IS OVER,
Yuuu knooow thaaats noooot ruight
How many times do I have to tell you?
bap
waaah
Please be nicer
Being nice won't get this through your thick skull!
I'LL WRITE DANIEL A LETTER.
I HAVE TO TEACH HIM ABOUT THE REAL CAT CONSTELLA-TIONS
The Cat Constellation
END

The Secret Stairs ch 8

Translated by:
Sailor Avalon
Edited by. Nukumori
QC'd by. sleekie,
SpaceTart,
Sailor Avalon, and
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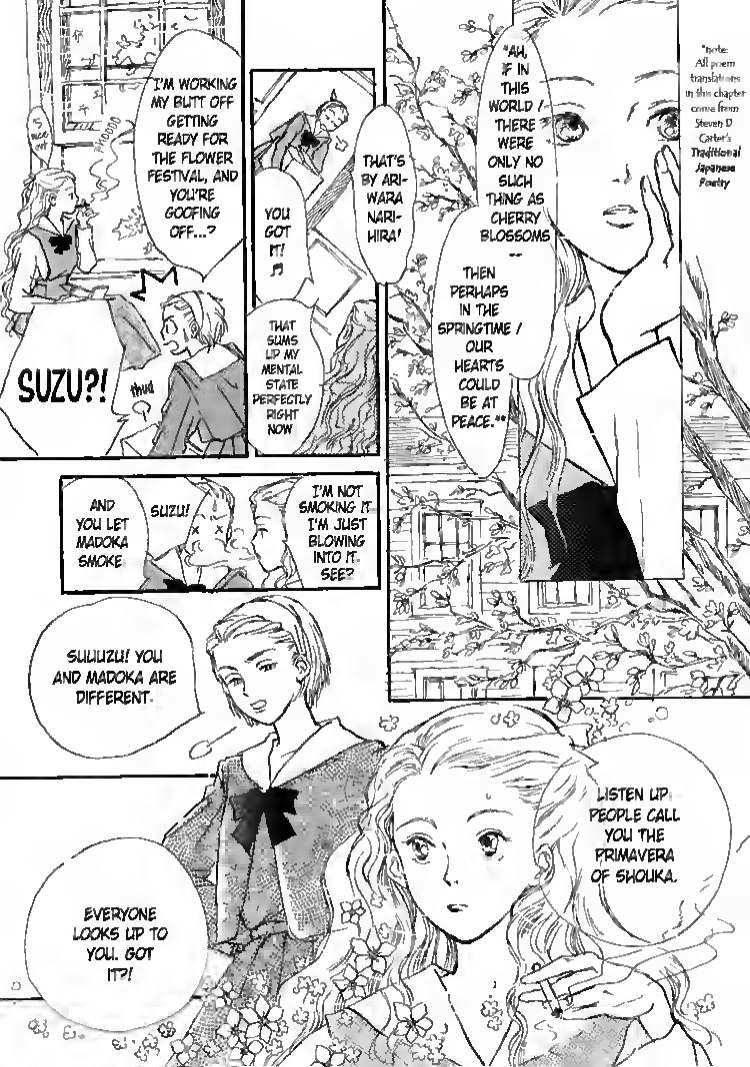
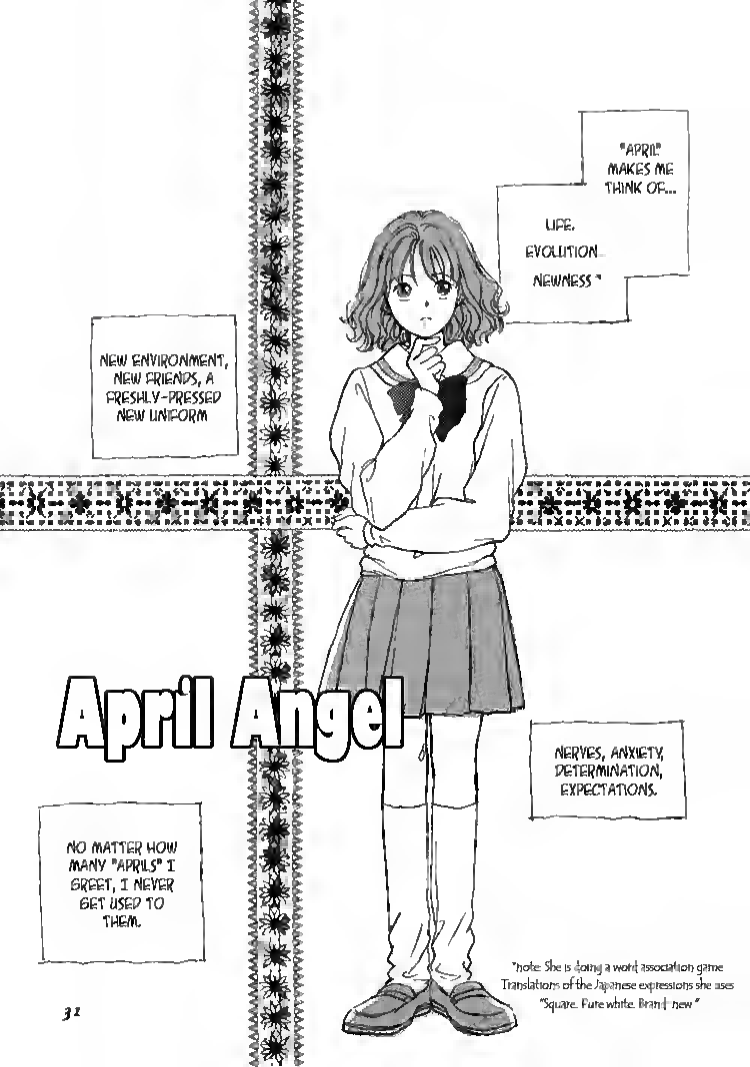

I'M WORKING MY BUTT OFF GETTING READY FOR THE FLOWER FESTIVAL, AND YOU'RE GOOFING OFF...?
SUZU?!
thud
YOU GOT IT! ♫
THAT SUMS UP MY MENTAL STATE PERFECTLY RIGHT NOW
THAT'S BY ARIWARA NARIHIRA!
"AH, IF IN THIS WORLD / THERE WERE ONLY NO SUCH THING AS CHERRY BLOSSOMS --
THEN PERHAPS IN THE SPRINGTIME / OUR HEARTS COULD BE AT PEACE."*
*note: All poem translations in this chapter come from Steven D Carter's Traditional Japanese Poetry
SUZU!
AND YOU LET MADOKA SMOKE
I'M NOT SMOKING IT. I'M JUST BLOWING INTO IT. SEE?
SUUUUZU! YOU AND MADOKA ARE DIFFERENT.
LISTEN UP. PEOPLE CALL YOU THE PRIMAVERA OF SHOUKA.
EVERYONE LOOKS UP TO YOU. GOT IT?!

point!
She sure is enthusiastic.
thud thud thud
SHE'LL CRY IF THE FLOWER FESTIVAL GETS RAINED OUT AGAIN
HANANOOO! THE TEA CEREMONY CLUB SAY YOU HAVE A MEETING WITH THEM ABOUT THE FLOWER FESTIVAL
I'M GOING!
I, MIMASAKA HANANO, WILL NOT LET YOU DO ANYTHING TO HURT THAT IMAGE
WHILE YOU ARE UNDER MY RULE!
Student Council Pres
YOU SHOULD PUT ON YOUR UNIFORM PROPERLY, MADOKA.
THE JUNIOR HIGH BUILDING.
I WAS GONNA ASK YOU TO MODEL FOR ME
GOING SOME-WHERE?
thunk
I TOOK ONE.
toss
HERE, MADOKA I'M GIVING THESE BACK
YOU'RE JUST LIKE HANANO NOW
GIVE IT A REST ALREADY



*note: She is doing a word association game
Translations of the Japanese expressions she uses
"Square. Pure white. Brand-new."

HELLO, SUZU-SEMPAI.
HELLO
A HIGH-SCHOOLER
Smile
thump
OH! EXCUSE ME.
tmp
tmp
tmp
THAT WAS KURIHARA SUZU-SEMPAI. SHE'S ON THE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT COUNCIL.
HUH..?
Pima?
SHE COMES TO OVERSEE OUR STUDIES SOMETIMES--MOSTLY JUST THE SPECIAL STUDENTS, THOUGH.
CHERRY BLOSSOMS -z
Flutter
SCORE! ♡ I GOT TO TALK TO THE PRIMAVERA!

(Actually, she had a double all to herself.)
BUT YOU LIKE ROOMING WITH CHIGUSA AND ALL OF THEM, RIGHT? ♡
MICCHAN, SAYA-CHAN... THEY'RE ALL FUN GIRLS.
...OH YEAH
OH.
Gasp
SUCH LUXURY!
OH, YEAH, IS IT TRUE YOU HAD YOUR OWN ROOM FOR A WHILE, HANADA-SAN?
YEAH.
YOU THINK SO?
↓ Theatre is a special class.
THE SINGLES ARE REALLY FOR THE STUDENTS WHO ARE PLANNING TO GO TO OTHER HIGH SCHOOLS
SHE WAS RIGHT
think
One of her special privileges.
HEY, WHERE'S CHIGUSA?
THE HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING.
Now that you mention it
remember
WHOA!
FOR REAL?
IT IS FUN.
But sometimes I want to read in peace.
HUH? WHERE ARE YOU GOING? WHY ARE YOU TAKING A BOOK WITH YOU?
OH, THE STUDY ROOM.
ME TOO.
I'LL COME TOO! ♡
.....
Why?
chatter
chatter

"ON A PEACEFUL DAY / SO WARM IN THE TRANQUIL LIGHT / OF THE SPRING-TIME SUN,

HOW IS IT THAT THE BLOSSOMS FALL / WITH SO LITTLE SENSE OF CALM?"

"BEHOLD MY FLOWER. / ITS BEAUTY WASTED AWAY"...

By Kamachi

I MEMORIZED THE HYAKUNIN ISSHU.

Back in elementary school

HOW REFINED.

IT'S FOR THE FLOWER FESTIVAL.

I WANT TO WRITE MY OWN POEMS, BUT. .

FLOWER FESTIVAL?

What's that?

BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY?*

This is a Buddhist school?

Urk!

OH, RIGHT, YOU'RE A TRANSFER STUDENT, AREN'T YOU?

*note: There is a Flower Festival that celebrates the anniversary of Buddha's birth on April 8th

BASICALLY, IT'S A FLOWER-VIEWING FESTIVAL.

DID YOU KNOW THERE ARE ROWS OF CHERRY TREES AROUND THE DORMS?

THE BOARDING STUDENTS

HAVE A FLOWER-VIEWING PARTY EVERY YEAR WHEN THE TREES ARE IN BLOOM.

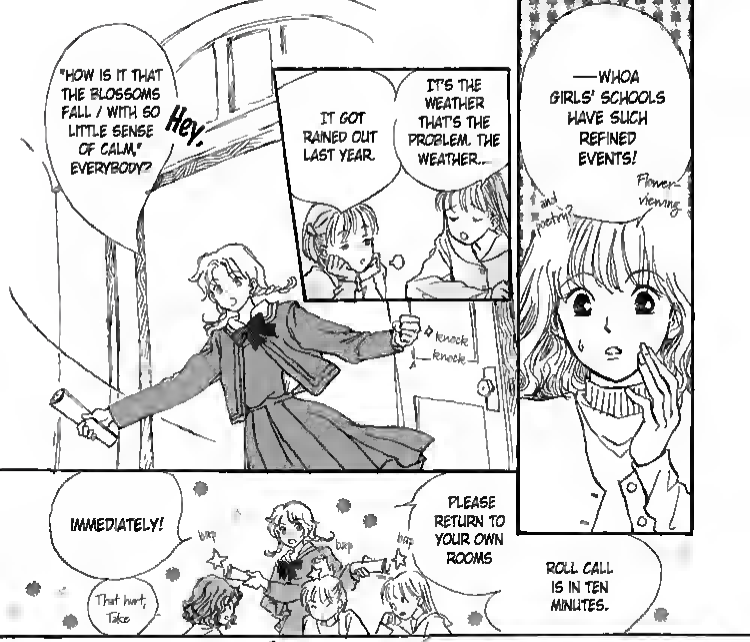
WE SIT UNDER THE BLOOMING CHERRY TREES

AND DRINK TEA, EAT SWEETS,

AND COMPOSE TANKA POEMS.

GENTLY OFFERING UP ONE'S SECRET FEELINGS TO THE OBJECT OF ONE'S ADMIRATION

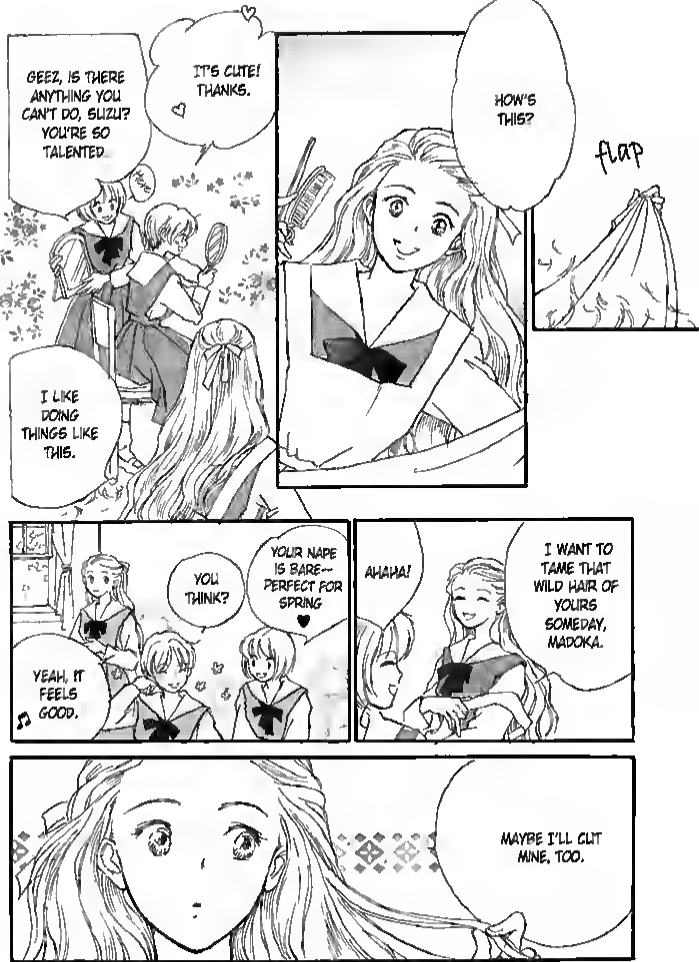
THROUGH POETRY—


"HOW IS IT THAT THE BLOSSOMS FALL / WITH SO LITTLE SENSE OF CALM," EVERYBODY?
Hey.
IT GOT RAINED OUT LAST YEAR.
IT'S THE WEATHER THAT'S THE PROBLEM. THE WEATHER...
knock knock
—WHOA GIRLS' SCHOOLS HAVE SUCH REFINED EVENTS!
Flower-viewing and poetry?
IMMEDIATELY!
That hurt, Take
bap bap bap
PLEASE RETURN TO YOUR OWN ROOMS
ROLL CALL IS IN TEN MINUTES.

Hoooh?
Lucky you!
YOU COULD'VE ASKED ME FIRST!
I RECOMMENDED YOU TO MIMASAKA-SAN.
WHY ME?
WE'RE MAKING LEAFLETS THIS YEAR, AND APPARENTLY WE NEED ANOTHER PAIR OF HANDS.
WOULD YOU COME HELP US OUT, STARTING TOMORROW?
WE NEED SOMEONE WITH NICE HAND-WRITING.
You were just at a meeting, right? ^^
HOW ARE THE PREPARA-TIONS COMING FOR THE FESTIVAL, CHIGUSA?
OH, THAT REMINDS ME. MARIE.

*note: In *Heidi* the title character is sent to be a companion for a girl named Clara. Heidi also sleepwalks.

YOU CAN'T ACT ALL ALOOF WITH OUR ROOMMATES.
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?
I'M JUST... ENJOYING THE BREEZE.
IT RELAXES THE MUSCLES OF MY FACE.
YOU'RE TIRED
BECAUSE YOU'RE WEARING FANCY CLOTHES
THEY MIGHT LOOK PRETTY,
There
BUT WEARING OUTDOOR CLOTHES ALL THE TIME WILL TIRE YOU OUT.
COME IN WHEN YOU START TO GET COLD
Well,
Night!


GEEZ, IS THERE ANYTHING YOU CAN'T DO, SUZU? YOU'RE SO TALENTED.
IT'S CUTE! THANKS.
I LIKE DOING THINGS LIKE THIS.
HOW'S THIS?
flap
YOUR NAPE IS BARE--PERFECT FOR SPRING
YOU THINK?
YEAH, IT FEELS GOOD.
AHAHA!
I WANT TO TAME THAT WILD HAIR OF YOURS SOMEDAY, MADOKA.
MAYBE I'LL CUT MINE, TOO.

NO!!

Running by

THE PRIMAVERA IS © THE STUDENT COUNCIL!

WE CAN'T HAVE YOU CHANGING YOURSELF WITHOUT OUR PERMISSION. OKAY?!

thud

thud

thud

HANANO IS A BUSY WOMAN, TOO

Later, Later!

Oh! Hanano!

thud

thud

I'm a trademarked character?

IT WOULD BE A SHAME IF YOU CUT YOUR PRETTY HAIR OFF, THOUGH.

It's so fluffy

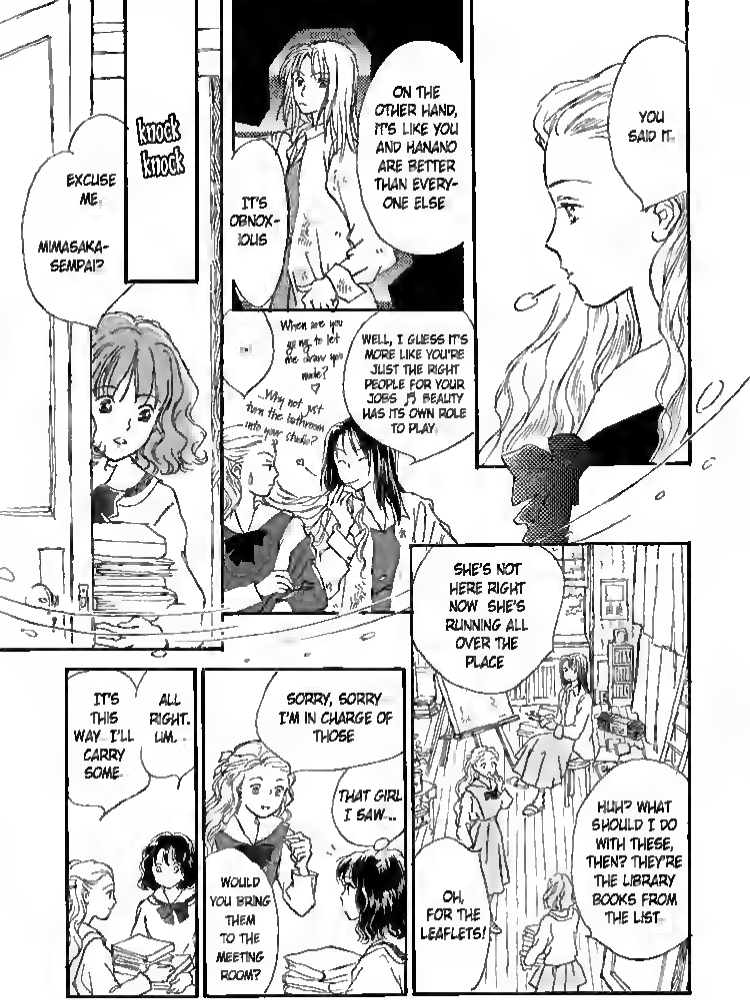
YEAH.

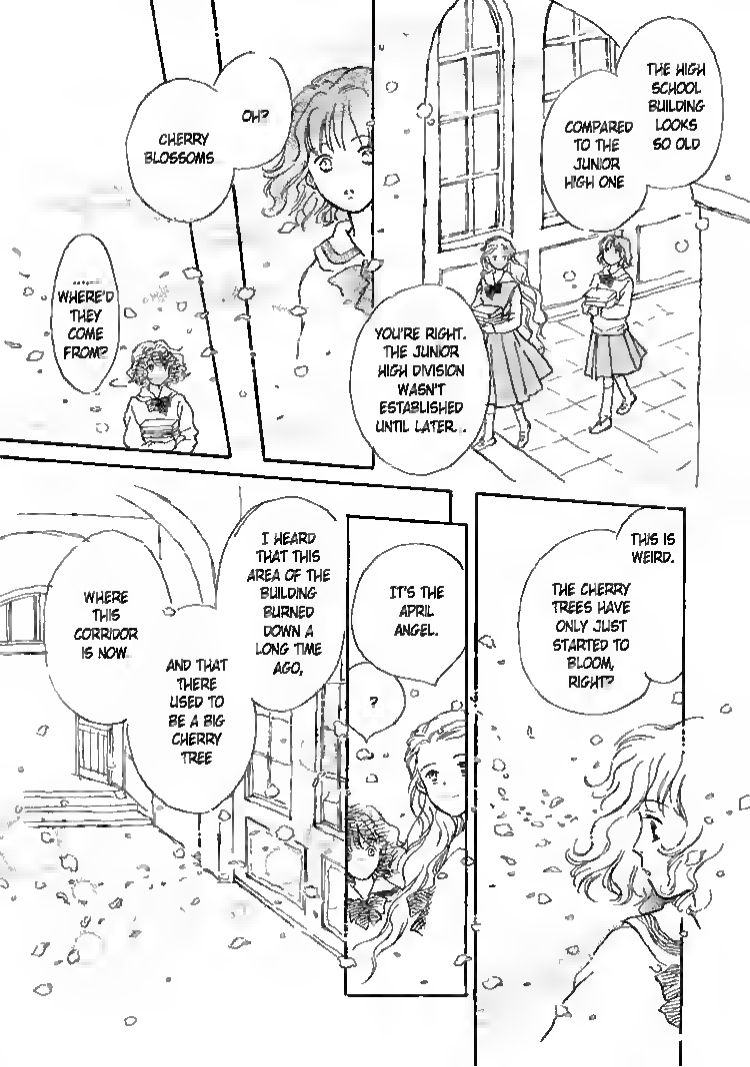
IT'S JUST GETTING SO HEAVY.

In more than one sense of the word.

?

*note: A period series about solving crime. It's had TV adaptations as well


knock knock
EXCUSE ME.
MIMASAKA-SEMPAI?
IT'S OBNOXIOUS
ON THE OTHER HAND, IT'S LIKE YOU AND HANANO ARE BETTER THAN EVERYONE ELSE
WELL, I GUESS IT'S MORE LIKE YOU'RE JUST THE RIGHT PEOPLE FOR YOUR JOBS ♪ BEAUTY HAS ITS OWN ROLE TO PLAY
When are you going to let me draw you nude? ♡
...Why not just turn the bathroom into your studio?
YOU SAID IT.
SHE'S NOT HERE RIGHT NOW SHE'S RUNNING ALL OVER THE PLACE
OH, FOR THE LEAFLETS!
HUH? WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH THESE, THEN? THEY'RE THE LIBRARY BOOKS FROM THE LIST.
SORRY, SORRY I'M IN CHARGE OF THOSE
THAT GIRL I SAW...
WOULD YOU BRING THEM TO THE MEETING ROOM?
ALL RIGHT. UM...
IT'S THIS WAY. I'LL CARRY SOME.


THE HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING LOOKS SO OLD
COMPARED TO THE JUNIOR HIGH ONE
OH?
CHERRY BLOSSOMS
YOU'RE RIGHT. THE JUNIOR HIGH DIVISION WASN'T ESTABLISHED UNTIL LATER..
.....
WHERE'D THEY COME FROM?
THIS IS WEIRD.
THE CHERRY TREES HAVE ONLY JUST STARTED TO BLOOM, RIGHT?
IT'S THE APRIL ANGEL.
?
I HEARD THAT THIS AREA OF THE BUILDING BURNED DOWN A LONG TIME AGO,
AND THAT THERE USED TO BE A BIG CHERRY TREE
WHERE THIS CORRIDOR IS NOW

EVERY APRIL,
IT RELEASES THESE PHANTOM BLOSSOMS
ISN'T THAT MARVELOUS?
"OH!"
SO THOSE OTHER BLOSSOMS I SAW...
I GET IT. SHE'S THE PRIMAVERA-- THE GODDESS OF SPRING.
ba
m!
SUZU?!
WHAT ON EARTH
DID YOU DO TO YOUR HAIR?!

I CUT IT.
I DID IT MYSELF, JUST NOW.
CUTE, DON'T YOU THI--
NO!
ALIGH! THE PRIMAVERA OF SHOLIKA HAS NO HAIR!
I WISH YOU'D WAITED UNTIL WE'D MANAGED TO PULL OFF ALL THE SCHOOL EVENTS-- YOU COULD'VE DONE IT AFTER THE END-OF-YEAR BAZAAR.
SUZU!
SO MY LOOKS WERE ALL YOU CARED ABOUT.
OH,
LONG HAIR OR NOT, I'M STILL ME

—YOU KNOW, HANANO,
slam
EVER SINCE YOU FIRST RAN FOR OFFICE BACK IN JUNIOR HIGH...
Please! Kurihara-san, I need your natural springtime charm to throw my opponents off guard!
Natural springtime...?
Let's get in the student council together!!
The capable one. President
The cash on VF
SHE'S BEEN DOING A GOOD JOB OF HELPING YOU.
I KNOW THAT
...BETTER THAN ANYONE ELSE
whisper
...NO IDEA-
WHAT HAPPENED TO HER?
IS THAT REALLY KURIHARA-SAN?
whisper
whisper
WHOA! NO WAY!
HEY, HAVE YOU SEEN IT YET?

MAY I SIT HERE?
SUZU-SEMPAI?
YOUR HAIR—
WOW!
THAT'S TOTALLY ADORABLE! IT'S JUST PERFECT FOR YOU!
You can't do things by halves, huh...?
Junior and senior high share a cafeteria.
I'M GLAD TO HEAR YOU SAY THAT
Thanks, Chigusa-chan.
It's sooo cute!
Cute, cute!
WAS THAT KURIHARA-SAN?
HUH?! I DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE HER THERE.
YEAH. IT'S LIKE SHE'S JUST ANOTHER NOBODY NOW.
SHE'S SO PLAIN NOW THAT SHE CUT HER HER.
I LIKE THIS POEM.
WHICH ONE?

We came to encourage you since you're working hard!
HOW ARE THE LEAFLETS COMING?
MIMASAKA-SAN.
IN THE LINGERING WAKE / OF THE BREEZE THAT HAS SCATTERED / THE CHERRY TREE'S BLOOM,
NEARLY ALL OF THIS STUFF IS BY TSUBAYUKI.
BEATS ME.
HEY, WERE TSUBAYUKI AND TOMONORI BROTHERS OR SOMETHING?
PETAL WAVELETS RIPPLE OUT / INTO THE WATER-LESS SKY
HEY, HOW ABOUT THE MANYOSHU?
SAIGYOU HOUSHI! ♡
"TO DIE IN THE SPRINGTIME, / BENEATH THE BLOSSOMS."
WHERE'S SUZU? SHE WASN'T IN THE STUDENT COUNCIL ROOM.
MAYBE SHE WENT BACK TO OUR ROOM?
They were cookies.
HMM. NUMBER 26, RIGHT?
PLEASE GIVE THIS TO SUZU
OH, HERE!
Okay.
WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO GO GET HER?
WOULD YOU?

knock knock
SUZU-SEMPAI?
crck
SLAM!
PLEASE EXCUSE ME FOR DISTURBING YOU!
IT'S FINE COME ON IN.
THIS IS FROM HANANO'S SECRET STASH OF HER FAVORITE TEA.
DON'T TELL HER I TOOK SOME
Oh, thanks.
HAVE YOU BEEN LIVING IN THE DORMS EVER SINCE JUNIOR HIGH, SUZU-SEMPAI?
YEAH. IT'S PRETTY MUCH THE SAME OLD FACES EVERY YEAR-- WE'RE STUCK IN A RUT

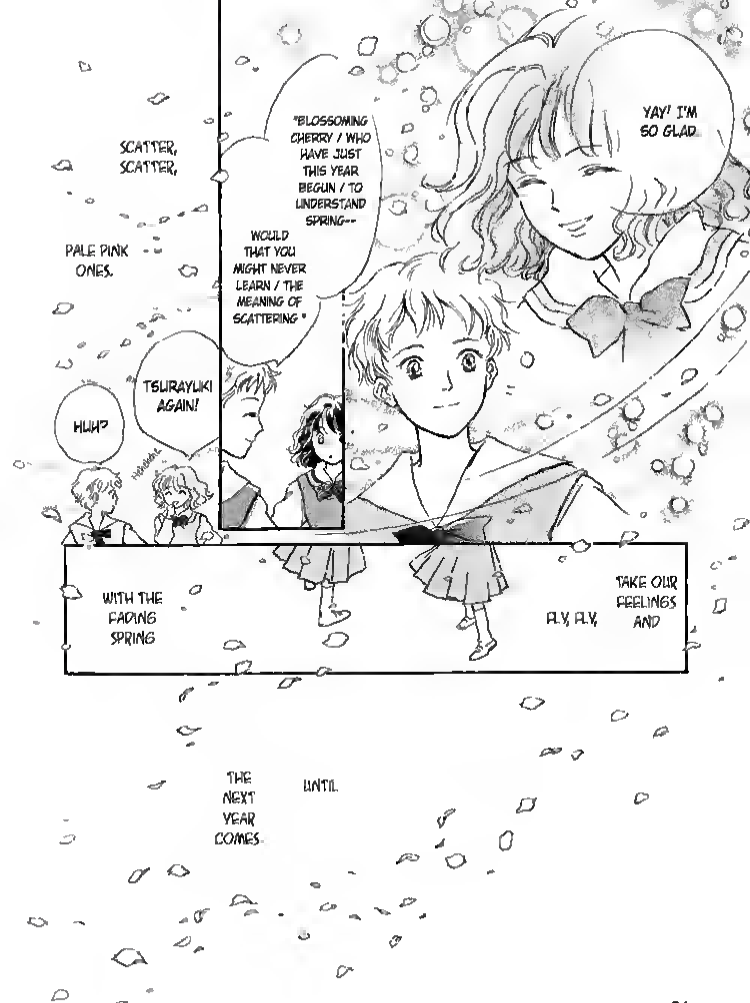
Heave the harvest
OH! SO YOU NEEDED A BREATH OF FRESH AIR, HUH?
WELL, SPRING IS THE SEASON OF BEGINNINGS.
THE ENVIRONMENT AROUND YOU IS CHANGING--
IT'S THE SEASON WHEN YOU CAN REINVENT YOURSELF, YOU KNOW?
BUT WE DON'T HAVE THAT HERE
I GUESS I WAS JUST SPINNING MY WHEELS SOME "BREATH OF FRESH AIR"!
WELL, SHALL WE GET TO WORK?
Oops, I let myself relax.
clink
YES
YOU CAME TO GET ME, RIGHT?
YOU'RE A TRANSFER STUDENT, RIGHT?
SO YOU MUST BE USED TO THIS PLACE BY NOW, HUH?
YES I CAME HERE LAST FALL
YOU CAN'T ACT ALL ALOOF WHEN YOU'RE LIVING IN THE DORMS
HUH?

IN GIRLS' SOCIETY, PEOPLE DO EVERYTHING IN GROUPS.
AND THOSE GROUPS HAVE THEIR OWN UNWRITTEN RULES AND SPECIAL VOCABULARY.
THEY'RE A BIT HARSH ON INTRUDERS.
AND I'M STUBBORN.
BACK WHEN I FIRST TRANSFERRED HERE...
A little.
tmp
YOU USED TO BE ALOOF?
NO... WELL, MAYBE
THAT'S ESPECIALLY TRUE HERE, SINCE IT'S ALL GIRLS.
BUT ONCE YOU'RE IN, IT'S A COMFORTABLE PLACE TO BE.
Girls' schools are like that!
Ahaha You said it!
SO THEY TOLD ME I DIDN'T HAVE TO WEAR FANCY CLOTHES ALL THE TIME
HUH?
I GUESS THAT'S HELPED ME
BREATHE QUITE A BIT EASIER

UH-OH! I ALMOST FORGOT TO GIVE YOU THIS
IT'S FROM MIMASAKA -SEMPAI
FLAP
A cherry tree is a cherry tree even if its blossoms have been scattered~
I'm sorry.
Hanami
A CHERRY TREE IS A CHERRY TREE, EVEN IF ITS BLOSSOMS HAVE BEEN SCATTERED
SUZU-SEMPAI?
HUH?!
SSWA...
...WHAT?

THE APRIL
ANGEL

IT BLOOMS AGAIN
OH! IT'S DISAPPEARING
THOUGH ITS BODY HAS PASSED FROM THIS WORLD
AND IT HAS BEEN FORGOTTEN,
WITH EACH NEW SPRING
OOH!
YOU'RE SURE?
WE GET DOUBLES NEXT YEAR.
NOW I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO BEING IN THE HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING NEXT YEAR.
WANT TO ROOM WITH ME, THEN?
YEAH I'LL PULL SOME STRINGS
It'll be our little secret


SCATTER, SCATTER,
PALE PINK ONES.
"BLOSSOMING CHERRY / WHO HAVE JUST THIS YEAR BEGUN / TO UNDERSTAND SPRING---
WOULD THAT YOU MIGHT NEVER LEARN / THE MEANING OF SCATTERING"
YAY! I'M SO GLAD.
HUH?
TSURAYUKI AGAIN!
HMMM.
WITH THE FADING SPRING
FLY, FLY,
TAKE OUR FEELINGS AND
THE NEXT YEAR COMES
UNTIL
END

The Secret Stairs

chapter 9

Translated by. Sailor Avalon
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A Lilicious Project
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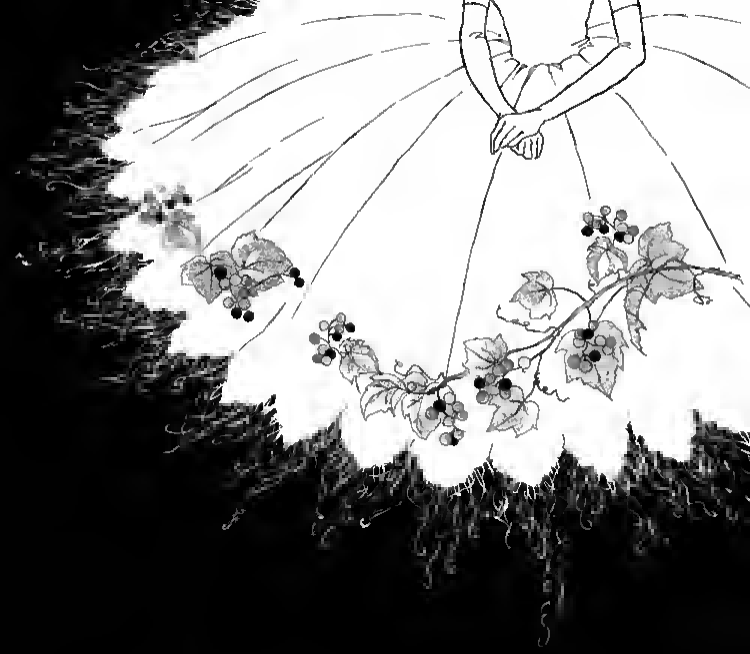


The Magic Garden

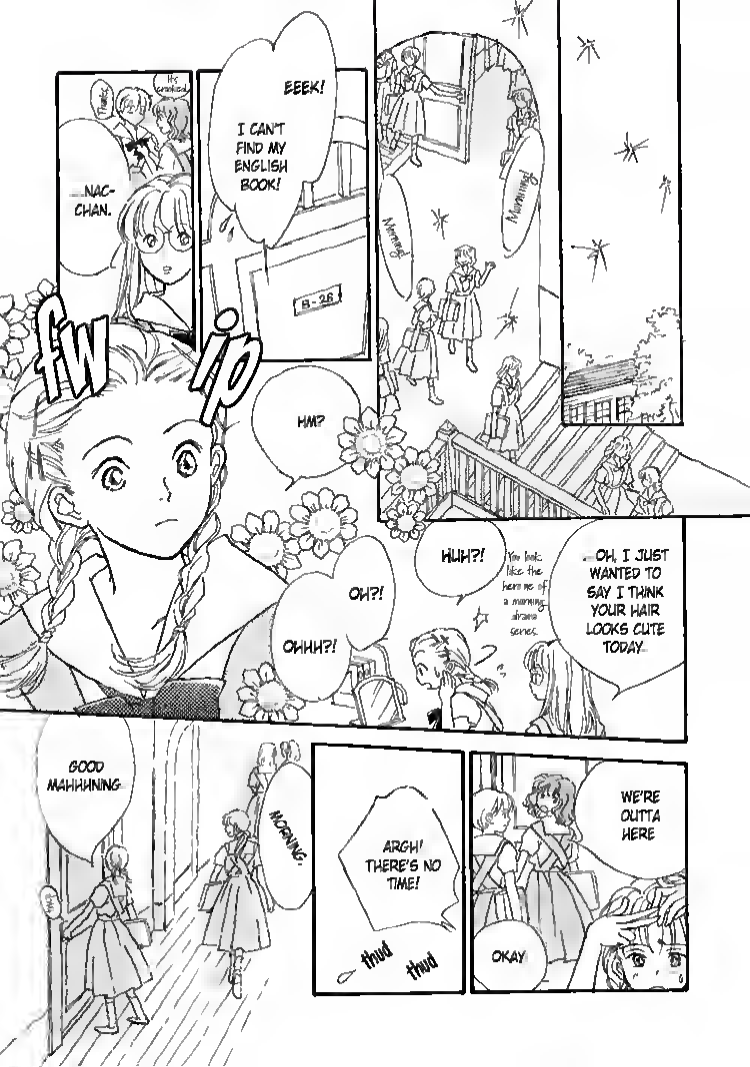
YOU SHOULD'VE WOKEN ME UP SOONER!
I WOKE YOU UP, DIDN'T I?
Shouka Women's Institute! Shouka Women's Institute!
HONESTLY!
I ALMOST MISSED OUR STOP!
BUT YOU DIDN'T, DID YOU?
I'M GETTING OFF I'M GETTING OFF HERE
PLEASE LET ME OFF!
grasp
I'M NEVER GOING ANYWHERE WITH MISHIMA AGAIN
She was so quick to leave me behind!
trot
trot

HUH?
OH!
MISHI--
MISHIMA!
DO YOU LIVE IN THE DORMS?
A-ANYWAY, LET'S GET YOU INSIDE
WELCOME BACK.
OH, MY
IT'S NICE THAT YOU GIRLS ARE SUCH GOOD FRIENDS,
BUT AREN'T YOU HOT, WALKING LIKE THAT?
Whee-Whoo!
THIS YEAR'S FIRST-YEARS
SURE ARE BOLD
A SICK
EXCUSE ME?
ANYWAY, WE HAVE A SICK GIRL--
GEEZ, GET A ROOM, YOU TWO!

OH!
WELCOME HOME.
click
...NACCHAN,
YOU'RE IN LUCK--I JUST MADE TEA
YOU BROUGHT SOMETHING IN WITH YOU?
HUH?
How rude
Something? You mean like?
NO, SOMETHING ELSE.
YOU'RE BEING HAUNTED, NACCHAN.
OH, YEAH. YOU'RE PRETTY GOOD AT SENSING GHOSTS, RIGHT, SHII-CHAN?
...G-
GEEZ, STOP KIDDING AROUND.
WELL, THERE'S AN HONEST REACTION
.....

Blah blah blah.
OH,
SO IT HAPPENED AT THE BUS STOP.
IT MUST BE SOMEONE WHO COMMITTED SUICIDE, THEN.
SUICIDE?!
Right right
WH-WH-WHAT DO I DO?! MISHIMA, IT'S A SUICIDE VICTIM! SHE SAYS IT'S A SUICIDE VICTIM!!
JUST BE QUIET AND LISTEN TO ME--ALL THIS STUFF ABOUT GHOSTS AND BEING HAUNTED IS RIDICULOUS.
They've already moved on to a new topic
I CAN'T TAKE THIS CRAP.
SO THEN...
WAAAH!
I just had to laugh at this.
BESIDES, YOU'RE THE ONE IT'S HAUNTING, NOT ME.
MEANIE!
You're acting like you just got dumped
slam
EXCUSE ME.
Dorm M
knock knock

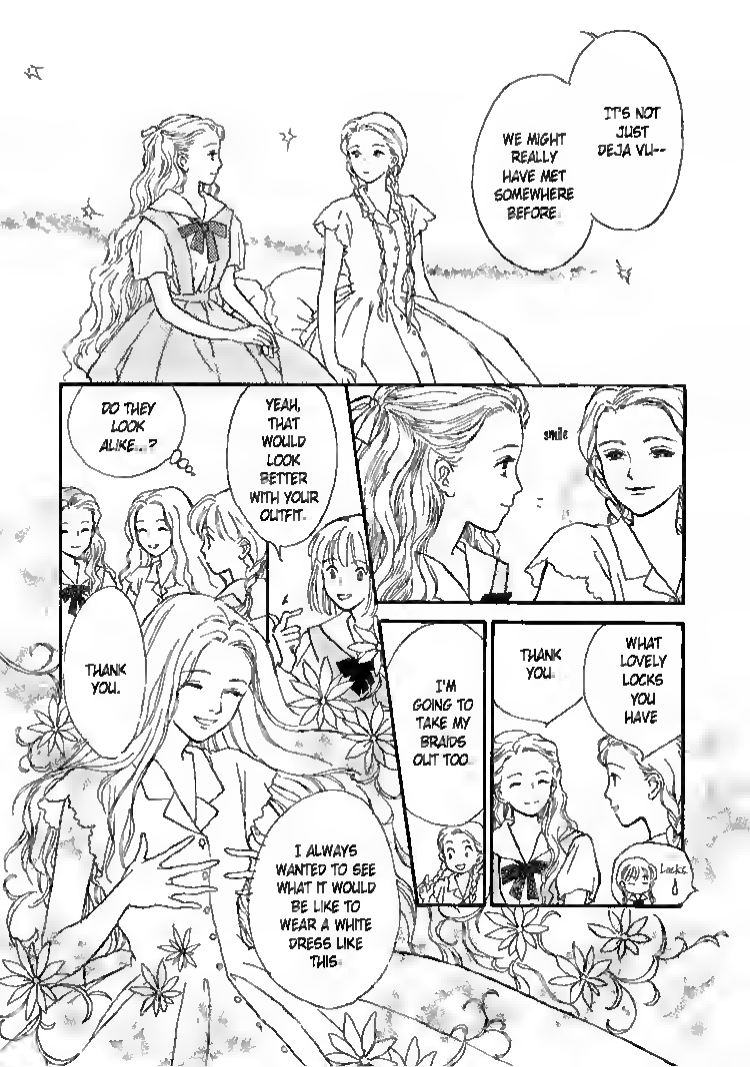
THEY SAID THEY'D CONTACT ME RIGHT AWAY IF THERE WAS ANY CHANGE
click
AND MY FATHER TOLD ME TO RETURN TO SCHOOL, TOO.
I SEE
OH, MISHIMA-SAN! COME ON IN
KEEP YOUR CHIN UP
I grew it out again.
KURIHARA-SEMPAI'S OVERNIGHT ABSENCE FORM--
tmp
OH, DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT
SO, WANT TO BE A DORM HEAD AGAIN NEXT YEAR?
DON'T EVEN JOKE!
BUT YOU'RE JUST PERFECT FOR THE JOB!
You don't look the type.
SORRY, I'M BEING RUDE I JUST CAN'T GET OVER HOW CONSCIENTIOUS YOU ARE.
Hehe.
Hee.
Hee.
Hee.
.....
Kiyohara-san sees right through her, huh?
WHAT'S WRONG WITH KIYOHARA-SAN?
THANKS FOR TAKING ROLL. PINCH-HITTING AGAIN?
SHE HAS A QUIZ TOMORROW OR SOMETHING.



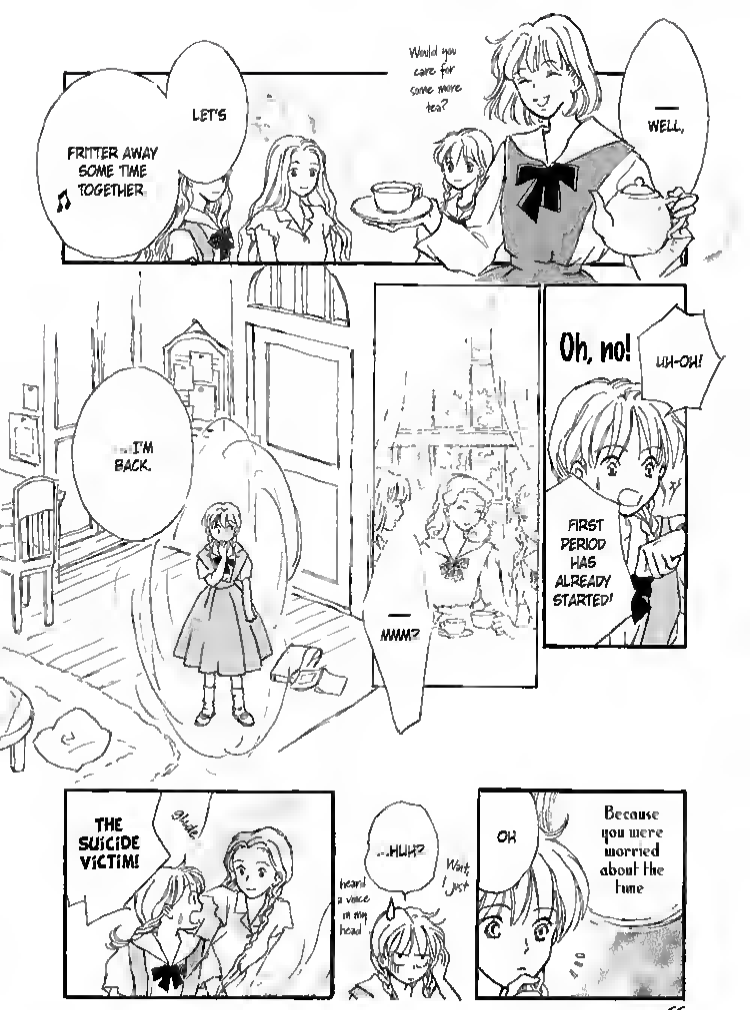
Morning!
Morning!
EEEK!
I CAN'T FIND MY ENGLISH BOOK!
B-26
Thanks
It's cracked
...NAC-CHAN.
fwip
HM?
...OH, I JUST WANTED TO SAY I THINK YOUR HAIR LOOKS CUTE TODAY.
You look like the heroine of a morning drama series.
HUH?!
OH?!
OHHH?!
WE'RE OUTTA HERE
OKAY
ARGH! THERE'S NO TIME!
thud
thud
MORNING.
GOOD MAHHHNING

OH, MY. WHAT A LOVELY ROOM.
OH! MY BOOK!
whirl
SUICIDE VICTIM!
NO, I'M NOT.
Y-... YOU'RE THAT.....

WELL, DON'T JUST STAND THERE HAVE A SEAT.
tap
—WHEN
DID THEY...
bold
HEY!
I KNOW JUST HOW YOU FEEL
THE MOMENT YOU GO BACK TO THE "OUTSIDE WORLD,"
YOUR MEMORY STARTS TO GET FUZZY
HAVE I
BEEN HERE
BEFORE...?
LIKE YOU'VE JUST AWOKEN FROM A DREAM.
YES,
IT'S JUST LIKE WAKING FROM A DREAM.


IT'S NOT JUST DEJA VU--
WE MIGHT REALLY HAVE MET SOMEWHERE BEFORE
smile
DO THEY LOOK ALIKE..?
YEAH, THAT WOULD LOOK BETTER WITH YOUR OUTFIT.
THANK YOU.
I'M GOING TO TAKE MY BRAIDS OUT TOO
THANK YOU.
WHAT LOVELY LOCKS YOU HAVE
Locks
I ALWAYS WANTED TO SEE WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE TO WEAR A WHITE DRESS LIKE THIS

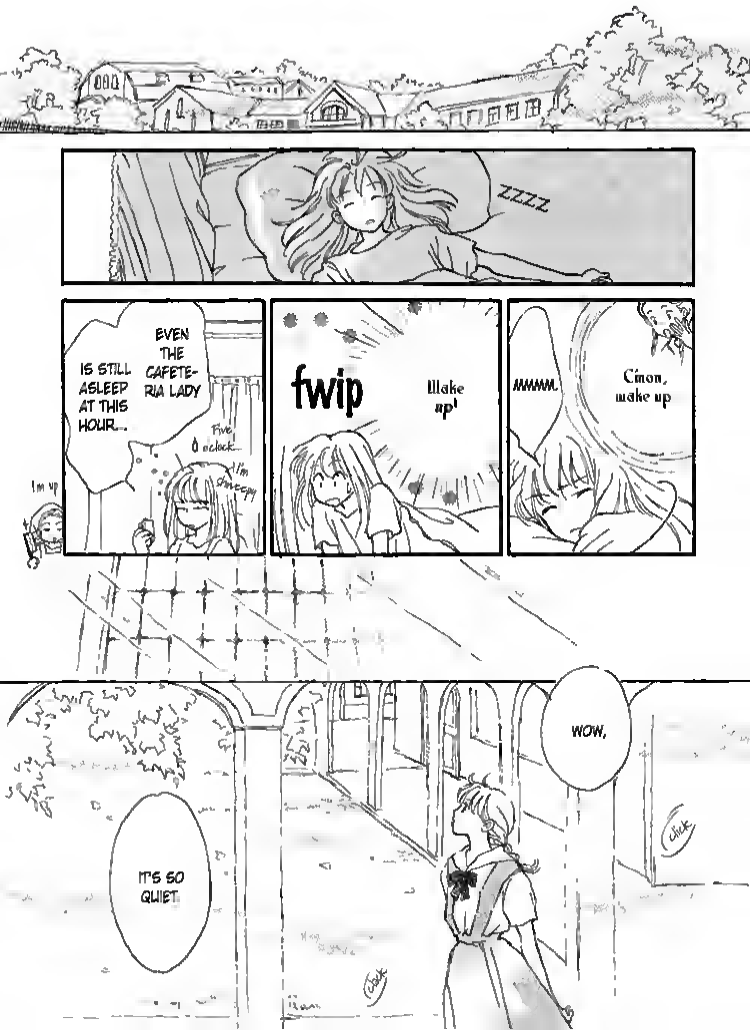
THAT'S RIGHT. YOU HAVE CLASSES, RIGHT? AND CLUBS?
HOME-WORK
LESSONS.
WELL, YOU ALWAYS HAVE SOMETHING TO KEEP YOU BUSY, DON'T YOU?
LUXURY?
I'M PRETTY BUSY, YEAH.
I NEVER THOUGHT I'D GET TO ENJOY SUCH LUXURY AGAIN
FALLING IN LOVE
PONDERING DISTANT DREAMS.
ALL THE TIME BEFORE ME BELONGED TO ME ALONE.
ENDLESS CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUR FRIENDS.
POETRY ON NIGHTS WHEN YOU CAN'T SLEEP.
GIRLHOOD DAYS
MY LONG-LOST
THIS MUST BE A GIFT FROM GOD.
I HAD THAT TIME ONCE, TOO.
DIDN'T LAST LONG.
IT JUST


LET'S
FRITTER AWAY SOME TIME TOGETHER
♫
Would you care for some more tea?
—
WELL,
...I'M BACK.
—
MMM?
Oh, no!
UH-OH!
FIRST PERIOD HAS ALREADY STARTED!
THE SUICIDE VICTIM!
Blade
...HUH?
I heard a voice in my head
Wait, I just
OH
Because you were worried about the time

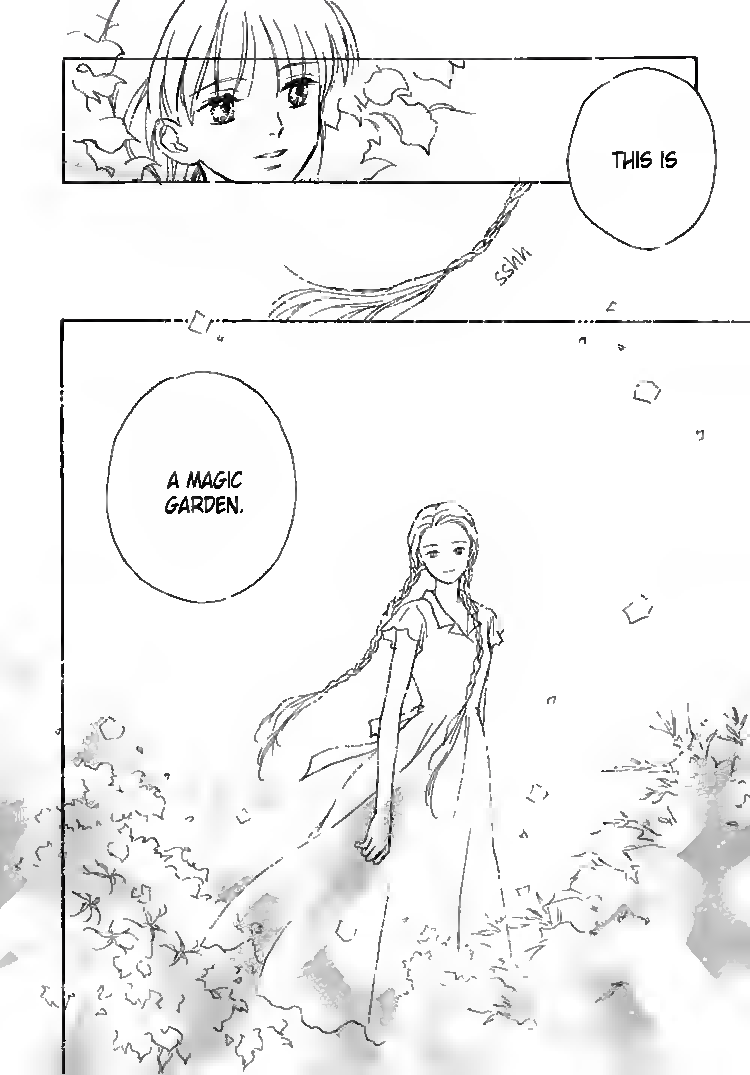
note: Lyrics are from "Natsu no Omoide" ("Memories of Summer") by Ema Shouko.

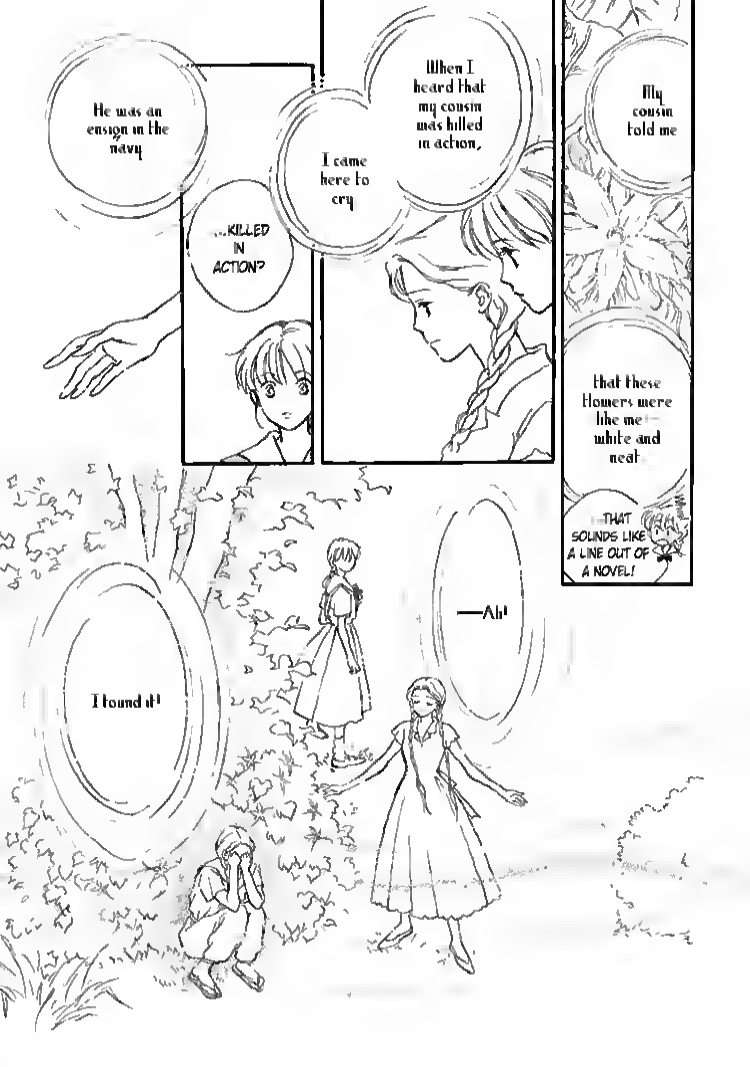
I
came here to retrieve something precious to me.
YURIKO-SAN?
But I can't remember what it is.
...Maybe I'm going senile.
swaying among
the flowers
SENILE ...?
Do you know of a garden where snake gourds grow?
SNAKE GOURDS?
White, lacy flowers.
ding dong
NO IDEA
Lacy?
OH!
MORNING, KINA-CHAN!
LATE MORNING, MAYBE.

giggle
Are you all right now?
I'm sorry I got a sudden cramp just as I was leaving the dorm
I THOUGHT MAYBE YOU DECIDED TO TAKE THE DAY OFF.
A CRAMP? YEAH, RIGHT!
——KINA-CHAN, HAVE YOU HEARD OF SNAKE GOURDS?
HUH?
YO
SNAKE GOURDS?
HEY
She's correct. They're both gynoic.
NACCHAN'S STILL BEING HAUNTED.
I don't think so
Hmmm
Are those like cucumbers?
WHAT'S WRONG, SHII-CHAN?
ding
THERE'S THE BELL, NAO-CHAN
.....
C'mon!
dong
NAO-CHAN TOLD ME WHAT'S GOING ON.
I WON'T LET YOU IN THE ROOM UNTIL YOU GET RID OF THAT.
YOU DEMON!


ZZZZ
EVEN THE CAFETERIA LADY IS STILL ASLEEP AT THIS HOUR...
Five o'clock... I'm sleepy
I'm up
fwip
Wake up!
MMMM.
C'mon, wake up
WOW,
IT'S SO QUIET.

tweet
chirp chirp chirp
chirp chirp
OH!
..THOSE FLOWERS...
HOW PRETTY!
THESE MUST BE THE SNAKE GOURDS
They're glistening with dew ♫
They wither when day breaks.
MAYBE THE MAGIC FADES
WITH THE MORNING LIGHT


THIS IS
A MAGIC GARDEN.


He was an ensign in the navy
...KILLED IN ACTION?
I came here to cry
When I heard that my cousin was killed in action,
My cousin told me
that these flowers were like me— white and neat
—THAT SOUNDS LIKE A LINE OUT OF A NOVEL!
I found it!
—Ah!

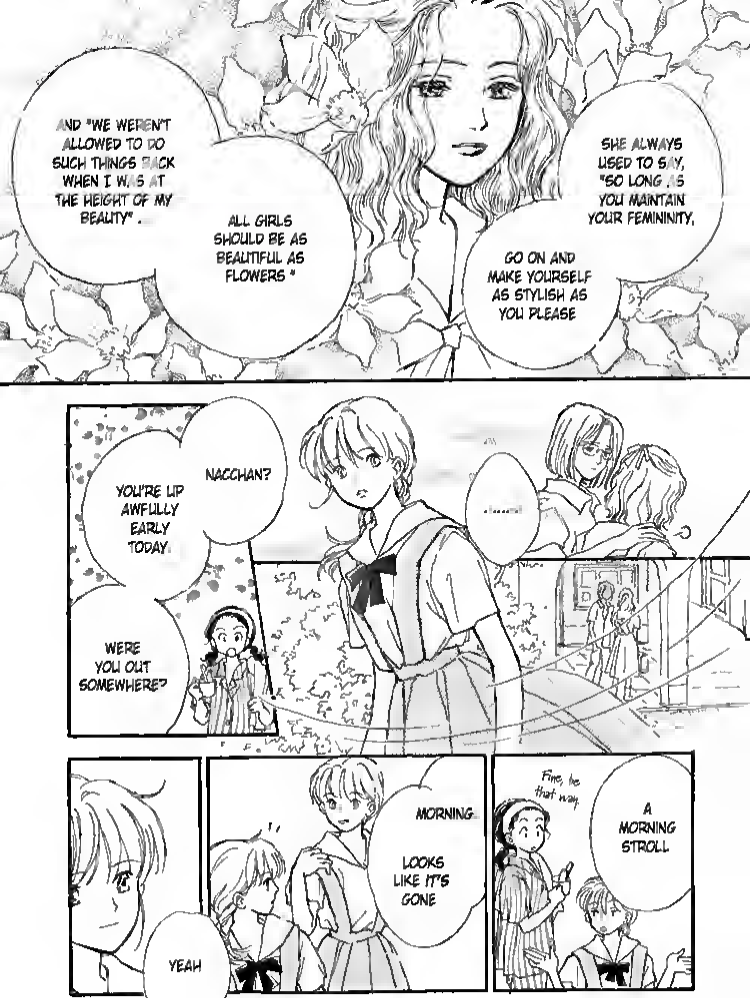
my
first love.
It was hiding here—

YURI-...

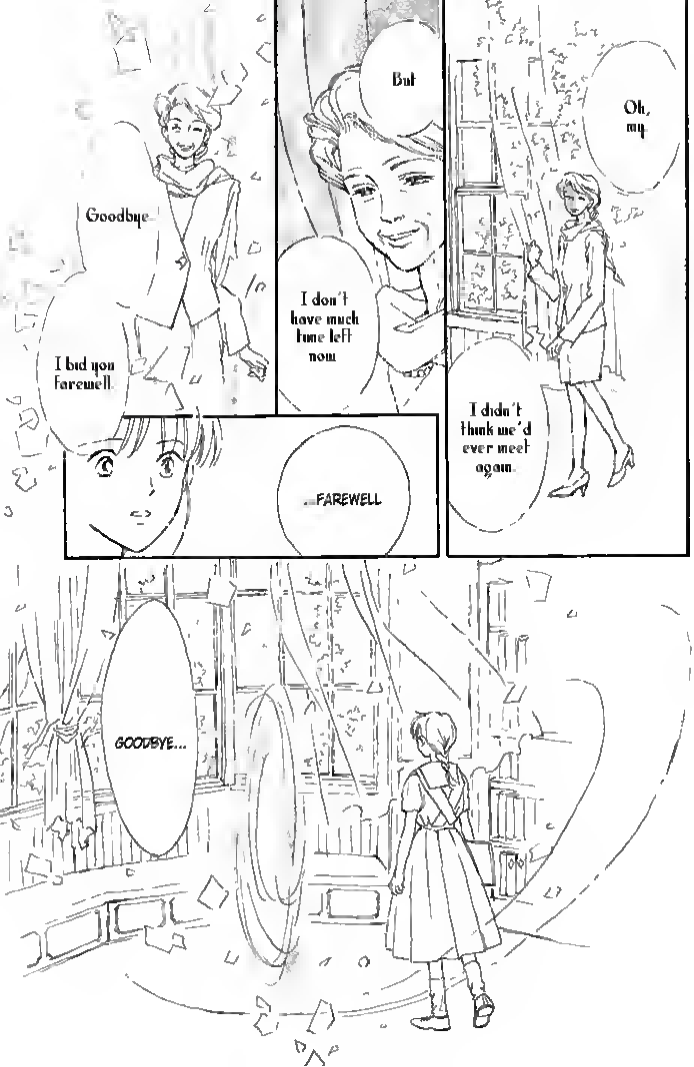
Thank you.

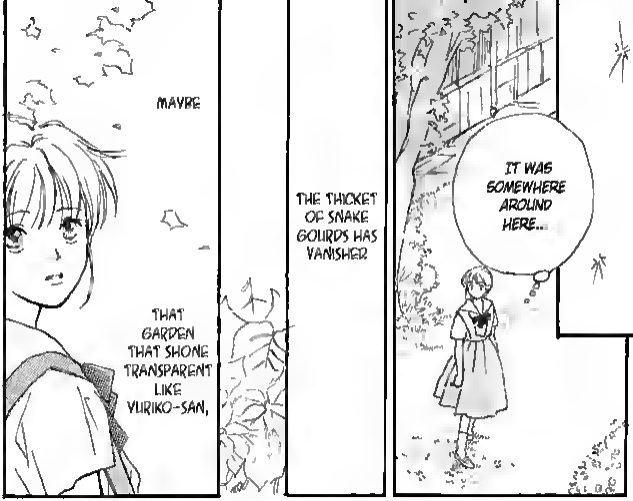
YURIKO-SAN...?

tweet
chirp chirp chirp
chirp chirp
NO, A CAR IS COMING FOR ME
I'LL CALL A TAXI.
MY GRANDMOTHER WAS A STYLISH, MODERN WOMAN.
YES.
BUT QUITE PERMISSIVE WHEN IT CAME TO CLOTHING AND HAIRSTYLES.
SHE WAS STRICT ABOUT RULES,
mutter mutter


SHE ALWAYS USED TO SAY, "SO LONG AS YOU MAINTAIN YOUR FEMININITY, GO ON AND MAKE YOURSELF AS STYLISH AS YOU PLEASE
ALL GIRLS SHOULD BE AS BEAUTIFUL AS FLOWERS "
AND "WE WEREN'T ALLOWED TO DO SUCH THINGS BACK WHEN I WAS AT THE HEIGHT OF MY BEAUTY" .
NACCHAN?
YOU'RE UP AWFULLY EARLY TODAY.
WERE YOU OUT SOMEWHERE?
.....
A MORNING STROLL
Fine, be that way.
MORNING
LOOKS LIKE IT'S GONE
YEAH

I heard some older students talking about it this morning.
SHE WAS KURIHARA-SEMPAI'S GRANDMOTHER, RIGHT?
OH I see.
HOW'D YOU FIND THAT OUT?
I HEARD THE OLD HEAD OF THE SCHOOL BOARD PASSED AWAY THIS MORNING.
LOOKS LIKE THE TEACHERS ARE ALL FRANTIC ABOUT SOMETHING.
MORNING.
MOR-NING!
All girls should be as beautiful as flowers
NACCHAN?
PLEASE, DOOR! TAKE ME TO THAT ROOM! JUST ONE MORE TIME, THAT'S ALL I ASK!
bam
I FORGOT SOMETHING!


Goodbye...
I bid you farewell.
But
I don't have much time left now.
Oh, my
I didn't think we'd ever meet again.
...FAREWELL
GOODBYE...



RATHER IN THE MORNING LIGHT,

WAS A MAGIC GARDEN AFTER ALL.

END

The Secret Stairs

chapter 10

Translated by Sailor Avalon
Edited by Nukumori
QC'd by sleekie, SpaceTart,
Sailor Avalon, and
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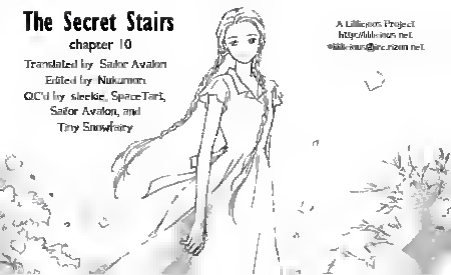

Readers' Survey Results
OH, THE RESULTS OF THIS YEAR'S READER SURVEY?
LET'S SEE HERE... OH, ANDOU MIYUKI GOT THE TOP SPOT! SHE EVEN BEAT OUT ALL THE POPULAR MYSTERY NOVELISTS
Well, she is an alum, so she's a perennial favorite here.
ALL DONE WITH YOUR BATH ALREADY, SENSEI?
That was quick!
WE'RE GOING BACK TO THE SCHOOL BUILDING.
AT THIS HOUR? DON'T COME CRYING TO ME IF YOU FALL ASLEEP DURING THE CEREMONY AT THE FOUNDER'S DAY FESTIVAL TOMORROW.
We just came back here to eat
IT WAS DESERTED. YOU SHOULD GET IN THERE BEFORE IT GETS CROWDED.
WELL, ALL WE REALLY HAVE TO DO
IS SIT THERE AND LISTEN, APPLAUD, AND SING THE SCHOOL SONG.
Yeah.

YES, MA'AM!
I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO IT!
I'm just wearing my school uniform
Especially Nanchan!
THE COSTUMES ARE ADORABLE!
OH?
WE HAVE A DRESS REHEARSAL TONIGHT, ACTUALLY.
WE COULDN'T GET THE AUDITORIUM ANY SOONER.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? AREN'T YOU THE ACCOMPANIST FOR THE AFTERNOON MUSICAL?
Don't pretend you have nothing to do with the festival!
Hehe
rm Mother
OH!

MIYUKI?!
AYA-CHAN!
Endless Adventure

*note: In this case, a respectful title for an artist.

GONE MISSING?
WHO HAS?
Your editor? The editor-in-chief?
A CHARACTER IN THE STORY?!
Huh?!
CAN A FICTIONAL CHARACTER
DISAPPEAR?
IT'S NEVER HAPPENED TO ME BEFORE!
AS I WAS WRITING, ONE OF THE CHARACTERS
JUST UP AND DISAPPEARED
Now I'm stuck, and the deadlines coming up.
COULD IT BE
A SIMPLE CASE OF WRITER'S BLOCK?
Classic
OH, I KNOW! HOW ABOUT YOU JUST KILL HER OFF...?
... FORGIVE ME
An amateur suggestion, I know. Writing is hardly my metier

THEY SAY THAT CHARACTERS ARE INSPIRED BY THEIR CREATORS.
SO THAT MEANS THAT A PIECE OF YOU DISAPPEARED ALONG WITH HER.
WHAT'S WRONG?
No wonder you're a teacher.
YOU READ ME TOO WELL. I'M PARALYZED.
QUITE A SHREWD ANALYSIS, IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF DON'T YOU THINK?
snuck
Oh!
I FIGURED THAT MAYBE SHE RAN AWAY ON PURPOSE,
AND THAT IF I CAME HERE, MAYBE I'D GET SOME SORT OF INSIGHT INTO HER DISAPPEARANCE
rustle
ARE YOU SURE IT'S ALL RIGHT FOR ME TO READ THIS?
IT'S NOT FINISHED YET.
Huh?

.....
flip
.....
flip
flip
OH.
THIS IS PART OF THAT SCHOOL SERIES YOU'RE WRITING--
THE ONE YOU BASED ON SHOUKA.
Guess you can't just kill her off, then. ()
Though a mystery set in a girls boarding school could be good too.
THE CHARACTER WHO DISAPPEARED FROM YOUR MENTAL LANDSCAPE ..
WAS IT THIS MINA GIRL?
YES.
I see.
SO, SHE'S A CLIQUEY, SELF-RIGHTEOUS QUEEN
WHO GETS OVER-THROWN
IN A CLASS COUP D'ETAT..
Though since this is a comedy, it's light-hearted
HOW IS IT THAT SHE'S NOTHING LIKE YOU?
INSPIRED BY THEIR CREATORS,
...IF CHARACTERS ARE

*note: Office lady: a female office worker who performs menial tasks.

I THINK I BELIEVED THAT THERE MUST BE A PATH SET OUT JUST FOR ME.
THEY'D RATHER DIE THAN END UP AS
MY STUDENTS ARE THE SAME WAY.
THEY DON'T WANT TO BE ORDINARY GIRLS.
ha ha ha
MILK
THE BORING LADY NEXT DOOR.
LOOKING FOR THEIR OWN ADVENTURES--
THEY'RE ALL RUNNING AROUND
think
HURRYING
BEFORE THEY RUN OUT OF TIME.

WAAA-
AAIT!
stare
MINA.
MINA!

YOU'RE COMING OUT TOO FAR.
STAY IN THE BACKGROUND!
AND YOU, THE FOX!
point!
DON'T MAKE ME REPEAT MYSELF AGAIN.
THE ACCOMPANIST FOLLOWS ME. NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND.
That arrogance it must be.
M-
MINA.
roar roar chatter chatter
twee
ENOUGH! WE'RE TAKING A BREAK NOW!
WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO KAZAMA-SAN TODAY?
NO IDEA!

!
Swip
MINA
Whispers
LOOKS LIKE THINGS ARE GETTING OUT OF HAND...
I'm surrounded by idiots!
SOME LITTLE PRINCE!
SHE'S MORE LIKE THE BIG DESPOT!
mutter
mutter
WAIT!
—I HATED THEM.
I HATED ALL THE GIRLS IN MY CLASS.
"I'M NOT LIKE THAT."
I WAS ABLE TO PUT UP WITH THEIR TEASING...
THEY ALWAYS JUMPED TO CONCLUSIONS AND THEY HAD ZERO IMAGINATION... THEY WERE NOTHING MORE THAN A CALLOUS MOB.
"SHE'S NOTHING LIKE YOU!"
THAT'S NOT TRUE.

"I'M DIFFERENT FROM THEM."
BECAUSE I LOOKED DOWN ON THEM.
THE TRUTH IS,
I WAS TERRIBLY CONCEITED.
I WAS AN UNBELIEVABLY OBNOXIOUS GIRL.
I'M SORRY!

MINA.
SO PLEASE COME BACK NOW.
I'M SORRY. I GOT WHAT I NEEDED.
EXCUSE ME!
Mr.
HERE
Hmh? Wasn't I just at rehearsal?
I HAVE TO GET BACK!
HUH? I'M NOT IN THE AUDITORIUM ANY-MORE...??
?
?
..U-UM..

THAT'S A THANK-YOU FOR THE SHEEP!
YEAH.
AND A MUZZLE.
A SHEEP?
Mayuki has no aptitude for art.
BUT THANKS!
I DON'T REALLY GET IT.
Hehe.
OH, I KNOW!
STICK!
way Results

Readers' Survey Results
Popular Authors
1st: Andou Miyuki
2nd: Kyougokuka Hiko
.....
.....
THEY'RE ALL RUNNING AROUND
LOOKING FOR THEIR OWN ADVENTURES—
HURRYING
BEFORE THEY RUN OUT OF TIME.

...YOU NODDED OFF, DIDN'T YOU?!
talking to myself this whole time?
Was I just
NO, I DIDN'T!
I'VE BEEN LISTENING!

BUT THERE'S NO LIMIT ON HOW LONG YOU CAN KEEP DREAMING AND GOING ON ADVENTURES.
YOU CAN KEEP DOING IT INTO ADULTHOOD AND OLD AGE.

OH, THAT'S CUTE
I DIDN'T NOTICE IT BEFORE.
HUH?
YOU KNOW, THE STAR ON YOUR CHEST.

MAYBE I DID FALL ASLEEP.

MIYUKI?

I AM!
YOU'RE SUCH A ROMANTIC, AYA-CHAN
You're not even embarrassed
IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE EMBRACING A STAR.
GOING ON AN ADVENTURE DOESN'T HAVE TO MEAN
DOING SOMETHING UNIQUE
OR EXPLORING UNCHARTED TERRITORY
The students are like jack-in-the-boxes
THAT MY LIFE
IS FULL OF ADVENTURES.
WHATEVER ANYONE ELSE MAY THINK,
I BELIEVE

I WANT TO GROW UP ALREADY
I WANT TO BE STRONGER, BIGGER, WISER.
THAT'S SO YOU, AYA-CHAN.
ISN'T THAT TRUE OF YOUR WORK, TOO?
I NEED A LOT MORE PRACTICE.
WELL, ISN'T IT BETTER TO HAVE AN OASIS NEARBY?
I DON'T WANT TO RUN AWAY LIKE THIS
TO A PLACE THAT WILL OFFER ME UNCONDITIONAL SECURITY

YOU'LL ONLY END UP GETTING MORE STRESSED OUT IF YOU DON'T HAVE ANYWHERE TO GO.
WHEN IT GETS TO BE TOO MUCH,
JUST GIVE IN AND DO THE RIGHT THING--GET AWAY FROM IT ALL.
Running away is the right thing...?
I THINK IT'S DIFFERENT FOR EVERYONE--
AN OLD TOY--
A PIECE OF MUSIC,
IT COULD BE A FAVORITE BOOK,
WE ALL NEED A DRINK OF FRESH WATER.
BUT WHEN WE GET TIRED,

IT REVIVES US
AND GIVES US THE ENERGY TO FACE ANOTHER DAY
——A DRINK OF WATER
AND A NEW ADVENTURE TOMORROW ——
I'M GOING HOME

KEEP AT IT!
MIYUKI.
NO NEED I'LL BE FINE
SORRY TO TURN UP AND THEN JUST DISAPPEAR AGAIN. THANKS FOR EVERYTHING.
I'LL WALK YOU TO THE GATE
YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CATCH THE A2 BUS.
EEEP!
WAIT, WAIT!
Now departing!
psshhh
giggle giggle
PHEW! MADE IT.

LITTLE ONES, LITTLE ONES,

EVEN ONCE YOU'VE LEFT THE NEST AND FLOWN FAR AWAY...

EVEN WHEN YOU'RE ALL GROWN UP...

DO COME BACK AND VISIT.

I'LL ALWAYS BE

RIGHT HERE WAITING

WITH A DRINK OF WATER FOR YOU.

END

The Secret Stairs

chapter 11

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QC'd by: sleekie, SpaceTart, Sailor Avalon, and Tiny Snowfairy

A Lilicorn Project
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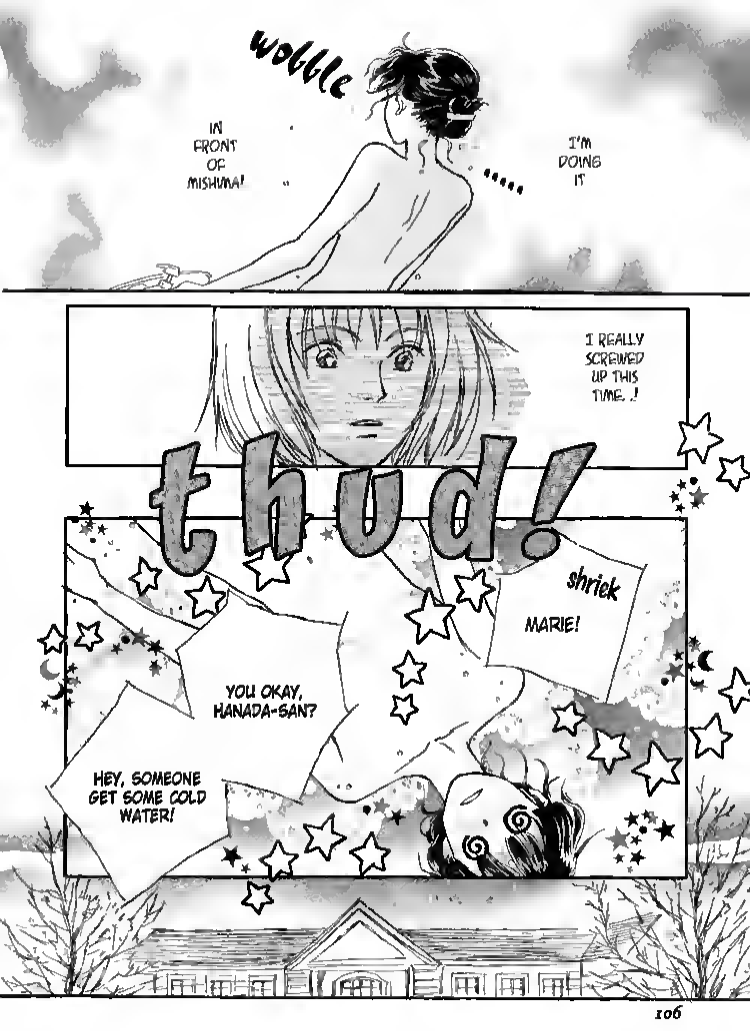
I'M GETTING OUT!
splash
thunk
HEY, CAN I BORROW SOMEONE'S SHAMPOO?
HERE!
UMM..
Maybe The Shining?
HMM, I THINK A HORROR MOVIE BY STEPHEN KING?
HEY, WHAT'S ON TODAY'S FOREIGN MOVIE THEATER?
pitter patter
lightheaded
CRAP..!
dizzy
OH,
THIS ISN'T EMBARRASSING ENOUGH..
dark
A-... AS IF


wobble
IN FRONT OF MISHIMA!
I'M DOING IT
I REALLY SCREWED UP THIS TIME..!
thud!
shriek
MARIE!
YOU OKAY, HANADA-SAN?
HEY, SOMEONE GET SOME COLD WATER!

Closed for the Day

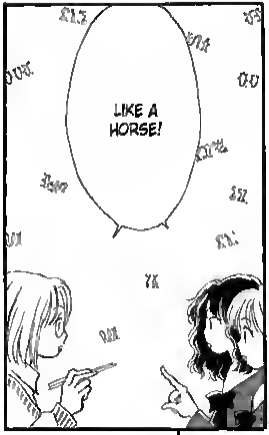
I CAN'T LIVE TO FACE ANOTHER DAY!
OH, JUST KILL ME NOW!
YOU ACT LIKE IT COULD NEVER HAPPEN TO YOU!
YOU NEED TO REHY-DRATE.
HERE, I BROUGHT YOU A DRINK.
It's Pokari Sweat*
*note: A soft drink/sports drink.
YEAH.
WELL, IT DIDN'T.
IT REALLY WASN'T THAT BIG OF A DEAL
THERE, THERE
Waaah!
FEELING BETTER, MARIE?

Mishima's legs
Go on, rub some more salt in the wound
SHE FELL RIGHT ON HER BACK, FACE UP... EVERYONE CROWDED AROUND TO LOOK.
I'VE NEVER HEARD OF ANYONE COLLAPSING SO DRAMATICALLY, THOUGH.
WELL, IT'S NOT UNHEARD OF.
It happens from time to time.
IT SOUNDS LIKE JUST A FUNNY STORY.
YOU GOT DIZZY AND COLLAPSED IN THE BATH...
Washing Area
Tub
WHEN YOU'VE GOTTEN OUT OF THE BATH AND WALKED A FEW FEET.
THAT'S THE PLACE THE DIZZINESS HITS YOU--
YEAH.
ANYWAY, THAT'S A DANGEROUS SPOT.
ARGH!
THE MOST HUMILIATING PART IS THAT I DISGRACED MYSELF IN FRONT OF MISHIMA!!
TO SCREW UP LIKE THAT, MARIE.
IT'S NOT LIKE YOU
THAT'S SMART.
And then walk slowly
I COUNT TO TEN WHEN I GET OUT OF THE BATH

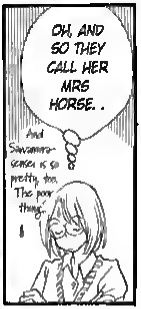
Marie-Vision
IT WAS SCARIER THAN THAT HORROR MOVIE THAT'S ON TONIGHT!
Well, I can't argue with that. It's true, she might be as scary as Jack Nicholson.
AS MY VISION WAS FADING OUT, I SAW HER FACE...
You were both in the bath
WELL, IT'S NOT LIKE SHE HAD ANY DIGNITY AT THE TIME EITHER.
IT'D BE EVEN MORE PATHETIC IF YOU ENDED UP CATCHING A COLD, TOO.
ANYWAY, YOU'D BETTER DRY YOUR HAIR.
Achoo!
Achoo!
Choo!

I TOLD YOU SO.
THAT'S A MONSTER OF A COLD!
YOU SHOULD'VE TAKEN THE DAY OFF FROM CLASS.
DIDN'T YOU SAY YOU COULDN'T LIVE TO FACE ANOTHER DAY?
SHUT UP.
LOOKS LIKE IT'S GOTTEN WORSE SINCE THIS MORNING.
Achoo!
OH, YOU HAVE A COLD, HANADA-SAN?
Chao!
IS IT BECAUSE OF WHAT HAPPENED YESTERDAY?
slurp.
HANADA
LIKES TO SLEEP ON TILED FLOORS ISN'T THAT RIGHT?
...YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE HAVING FUN.
Don't mix to the tart
What a frightening smile...
OH, DO I?
Here, a big portion.

OH? THE SCHOOL STORE DOESN'T CARRY THAT BRAND.
A SPECIAL TREAT FOR YOU.
MARI.
bap
OOH! PUDDING FROM KURUMIYA! ♫
I APPRECIATE IT
I WON'T PUNISH YOU FOR SNEAKING OUT THIS TIME.
YOU MUST HAVE RUN ALL THE WAY TO KURUMIYA JUST FOR THAT ONE CUP OF PUDDING. OUT OF RESPECT FOR YOUR DEVOTION TO YOUR FRIEND,
Shot one for herself too.
YOU'RE WELCOME
THANKS!
SO MRS HORSE IS MAKING ME STAY.
YES— BUT IT'S JUST A HEAD COLD, AND I DON'T HAVE A FEVER.
Achoo!
YOU MUST BE DISRUPTING CLASSES
WHY DON'T YOU TAKE A HALF-DAY TODAY?
YOU POOR THING. HAVE YOU BEEN TO SEE THE SCHOOL NURSE YET?
Achoo!
YES, AND GOT SOME MEDICINE.


LIKE A HORSE!

MRS HORSE?
ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT THE SCHOOL NURSE?
YES, I KNOW.
AND YOU SEE, HER HUSBAND HAS A FACE..
YES. WELL, SAWAMURA-SENSEI HAS SOME PHOTOS OF HER FAMILY ON HER DESK..


OH, AND SO THEY CALL HER MRS HORSE..
And Sawamura-sensei is so pretty, too. The poor thing.

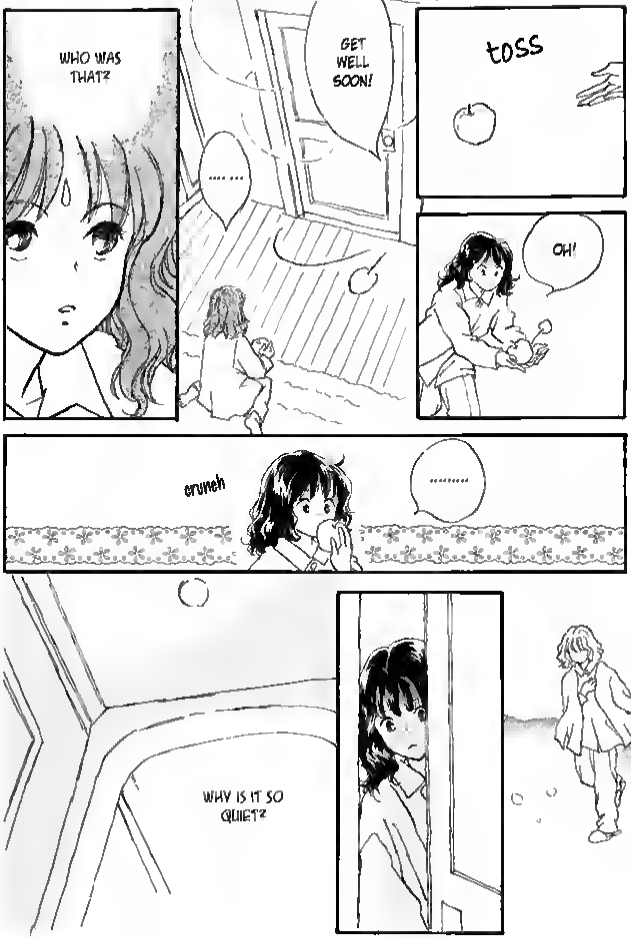
YOU'RE FLUSHED.
ARE YOU SURE YOU DON'T HAVE A BIT OF A FEVER?

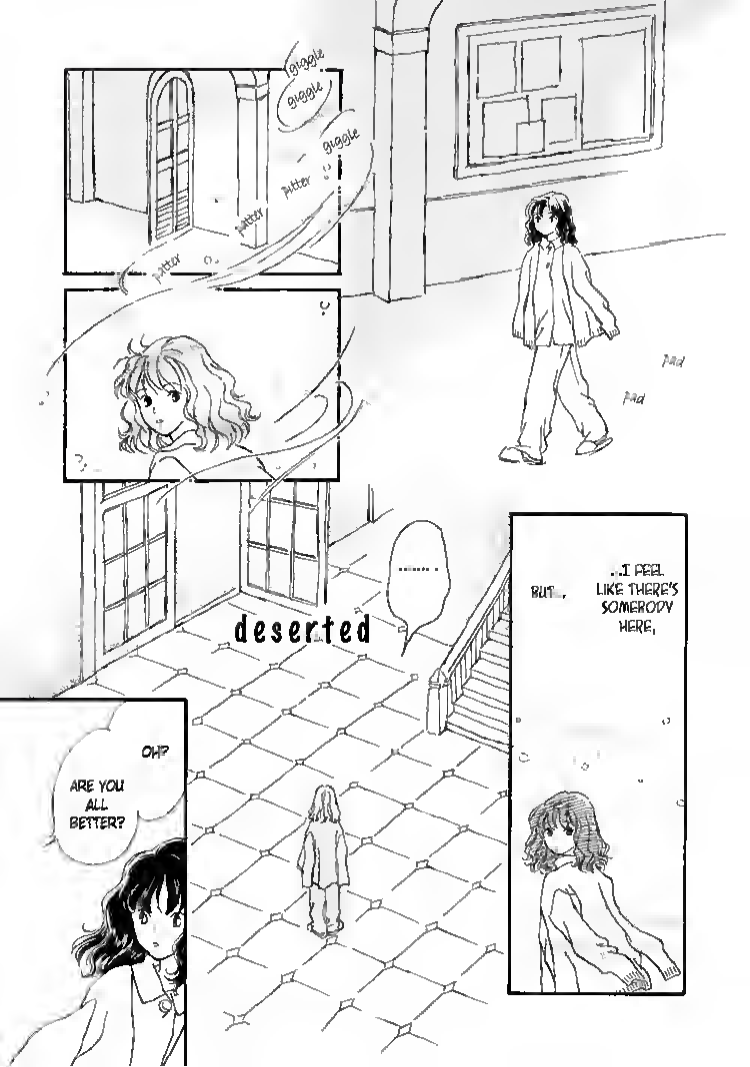
Achoo!

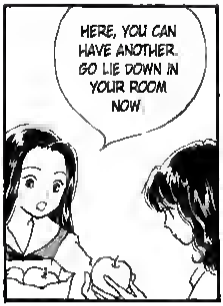
I'LL TALK TO SAWAMURA-SENSEI,
SO GO BACK TO YOUR ROOM AND LIE DOWN ONCE YOU FINISH EATING

APPLE JUICE
ON MY WAY HOME?
WANT ME TO PICK YOU UP SOMETHING
OKAY! MAKE SURE YOU GET PLENTY OF REST.
OH, SO YOU DO HAVE A FEVER.
twip
GOTTA JUST BLOCK IT OUT!
I'VE GOT A LUMP WHERE I HIT MY HEAD YESTERDAY.
... OWWW.
fwump
ZZZ...

DID CLASS JUST LET OUT?
tmp
tmp
tmp——— tmp
——NO, IT'S TOO QUIET FOR THAT.
chk...
creeaak
tmp tmp
I'M HERE TO CHECK IN ON YOU!


WHO WAS THAT?
GET WELL SOON!
....
toss
OH!
crunch
.....
WHY IS IT SO QUIET?


giggle
giggle
giggle
patter
patter
patter
pad
pad
deserted
.....
BUT...
...I FEEL LIKE THERE'S SOMEBODY HERE.
OH?
ARE YOU ALL BETTER?

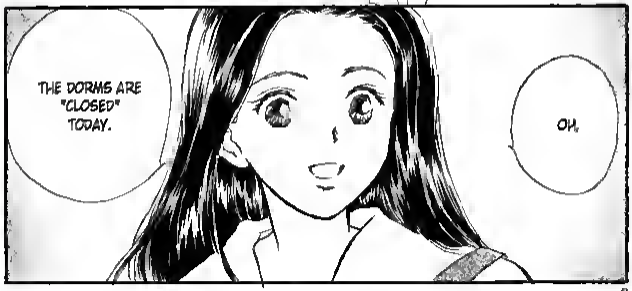

HERE, YOU CAN HAVE ANOTHER. GO LIE DOWN IN YOUR ROOM NOW.

YES, YOU DON'T FEEL HOT.
twip ☆

IS YOUR FEVER GONE?

NOBODY SEEMS TO HAVE COME BACK TO THE DORMS YET.
IS THERE AN ASSEMBLY TODAY?

EXCUSE ME!


THE DORMS ARE "CLOSED" TODAY.
OH.

ONLY PEOPLE TAKING "TODAY" OFF ARE HERE RIGHT NOW.
HUUUH?
YOU SHOULD REST UP TODAY SO YOU CAN GET WELL SOON.
I SORT OF GET WHAT YOU'RE SAYING, BUT NOT REALLY.
silence
Sigh
IT FEELS LIKE I'M THE LAST ONE LEFT ON EARTH
.....

-click
ISN'T THERE ANYONE ELSE HERE?

IS SHE A JUNIOR-HIGH STUDENT?
She's bigger than me, though.
I WAS JUST WONDERING IF YOU WERE STAYING HOME FROM SCHOOL TODAY, TOO.

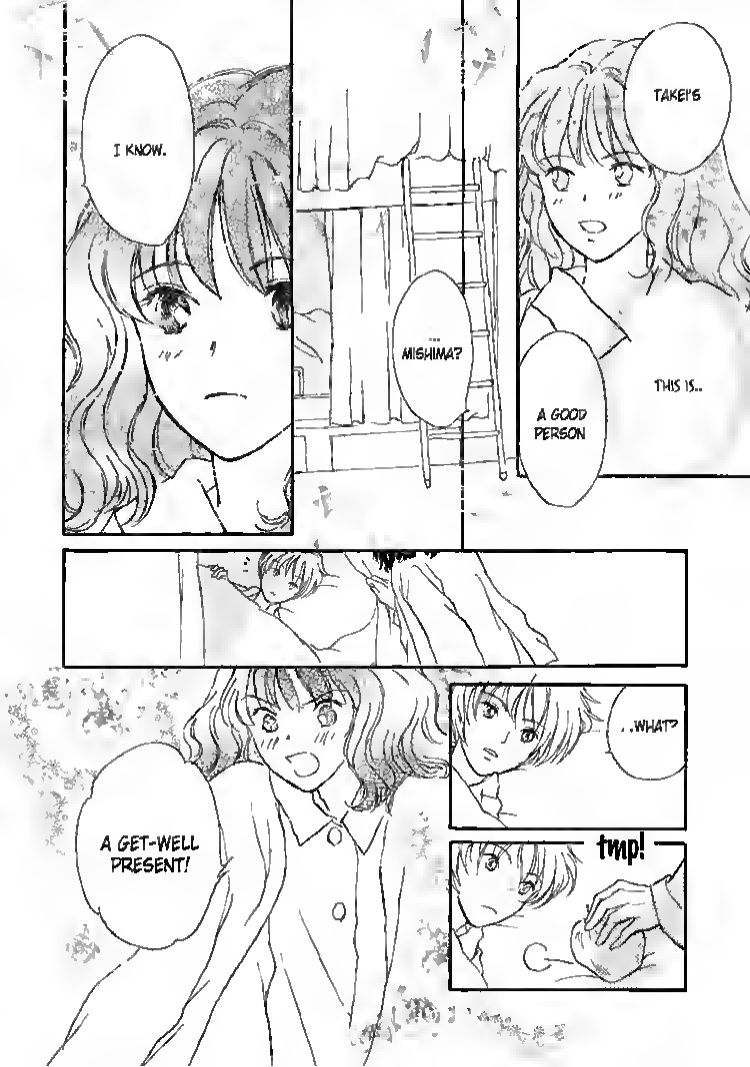
SHE REMINDS ME OF SOMEONE.

DID YOU WANT SOMETHING?

IN THE SAME BOAT?
I JUST FIGURED I'D SAY HELLO, SINCE WE'RE IN THE SAME BOAT.
BYE!
NOW THAT'S JUST OBNOXIOUS.
SO WHAT IF I AM?
HOW SO?
YOU HADN'T NOTICED?
NOBODY ELSE HERE?
THERE'S
Glance
SO WHEN I SAW YOU, I WANTED TO GO UP AND TALK TO YOU, Y'KNOW?
...WELL, WE'RE BOTH ALL ALONE HERE. THERE'S NOBODY ELSE IN SIGHT.

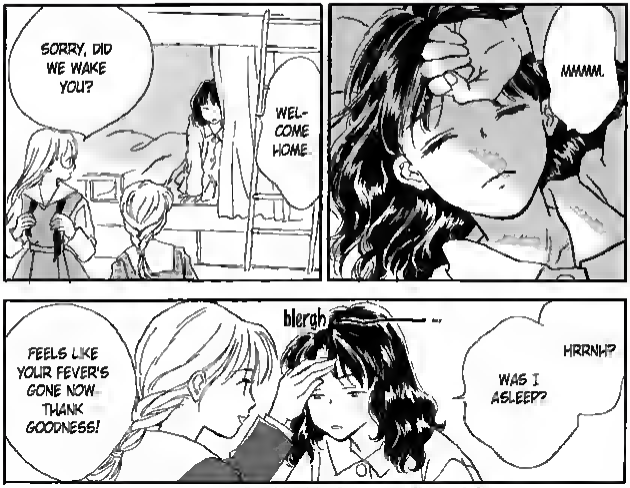
WOW, YOUR ROOM IS HUGE!
HOW MANY ROOM-MATES DO YOU HAVE?
NINE.
WHOA!
Oh, there really are five bunk beds.
JUST FELT LIKE IT. Not like I have anything else to do
WHY ARE YOU FOLLOWING ME?
push
push
pad
pad
DUNNO. I NEVER PAID MUCH ATTENTION TO STUFF LIKE THAT
THIS MUST SEEM EVEN STRANGER TO YOU THEN, RIGHT?
DOESN'T IT SEEM TOO QUIET? IT'S ALWAYS SO LOUD
COULD YOU LEAVE NOW? I'M GOING TO BED. I HAVE A HEADACHE.
IT'S LIKE
I'M LOOKING AT MY PAST SELF
OKAY, I'LL JUST ASSUME THAT IT'S YOUR HEADACHE
THAT'S MAKING YOU SO DISAGREEABLE

I HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE.
DID...
THE ROOM MONITOR SEND YOU?
MAYBE THIS "TODAY"
THE ROOM MONITOR?
DOES SHE NAG PEOPLE, ALWAYS STICKING HER NOSE IN...?
Hehe!
YES! SHE'S CONSTANTLY BREATHING DOWN MY NECK,
IT'S OBNOXIOUS! I CAN'T STAND HER.
SHE'S UNSOPHISTICATED, AND SHE'S ALWAYS SO RESPONSIBLE...
ISN'T THE ONE FROM MY CALENDAR
DON'T TELL ME..


I KNOW.
...MISHIMA?
TAKEI'S
THIS IS...
A GOOD PERSON
...WHAT?
tmp!
A GET-WELL PRESENT!

slam
YOU CAN THANK THE ROOM MONITOR FOR IT!
ding dong ding dong

WE'RE BACK!
HOW ARE YOU FEELING, MARIE?


SORRY, DID WE WAKE YOU?
WELCOME HOME
MMMM.
blergh
FEELS LIKE YOUR FEVER'S GONE NOW. THANK GOODNESS!
HRRNH? WAS I ASLEEP?
The cafeteria lady will make you some if you ask for it.
GOK
HOW ABOUT SOME RICE PORRIDGE?
DO YOU WANT DINNER?
Mmm
Um
THEY WERE OUT OF APPLE JUICE, SO I GOT ORANGE INSTEAD
YES?
knock knock
THANKS

HERE
OH, YOU DON'T LOOK THAT SICK
HUH?
A GET-WELL PRESENT
SHOWING COMPASSION FOR THE ENEMY, HUH?
MAYBE IT'S A POISONED APPLE!
How rude
.....
tmp

I JUST HAD A REALLY NICE DREAM..
I THINK
HM?
MY DREAM.
WANT ME TO PEEL IT FOR YOU?
I FEEL LIKE I'VE JUST LOST SOMETHING PRECIOUS.
Oh, it's just out of reach...
IT'S FADING TOO FAST.
ARGH.
OH? WHAT SORT OF DREAM?
Mmm are you allright?
OH?
WELL, IF YOU EVER REMEMBER IT, YOU'LL HAVE TO TELL US ALL ABOUT IT.

END

The Secret Stairs chapter 12

Translated by: Sailor Avalon
Edited by: Nukumori
QC'd by: sleekie, SpaceTart, Sailor Avalon, and Tiny Snowfairy

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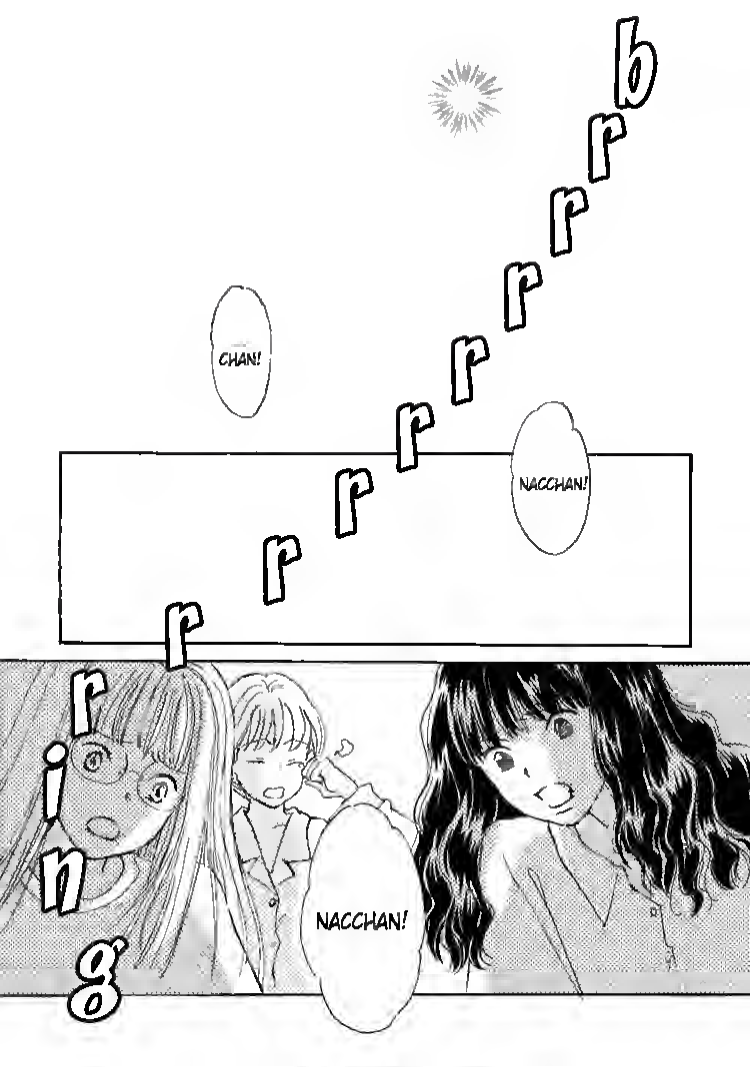
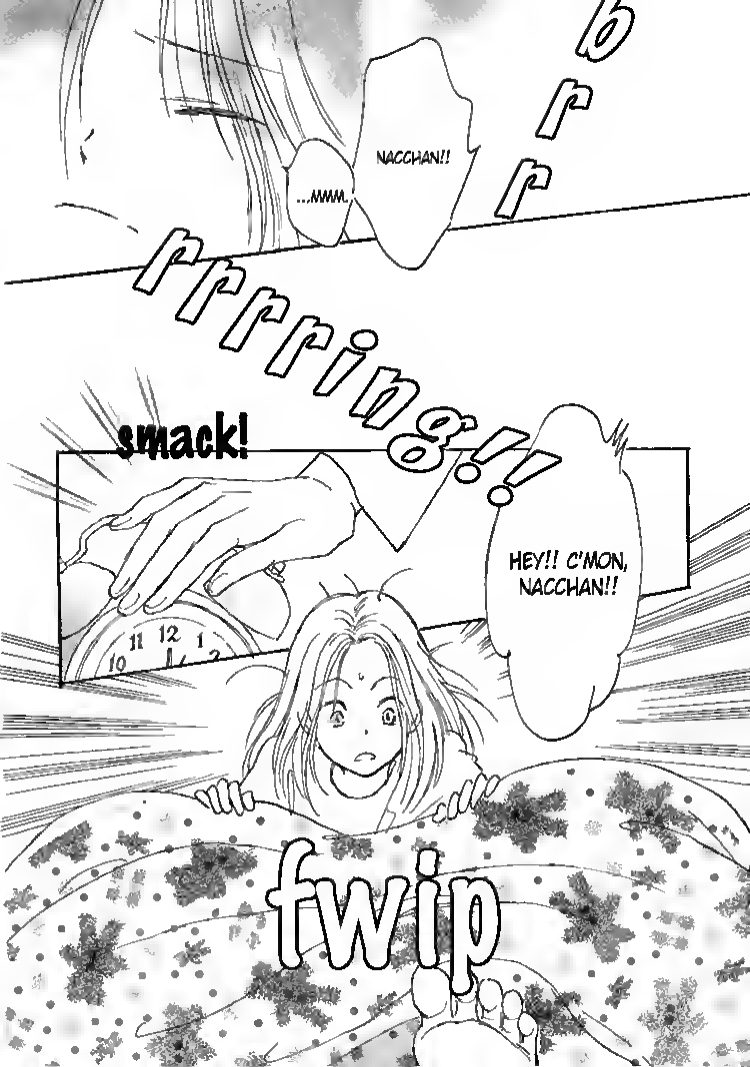
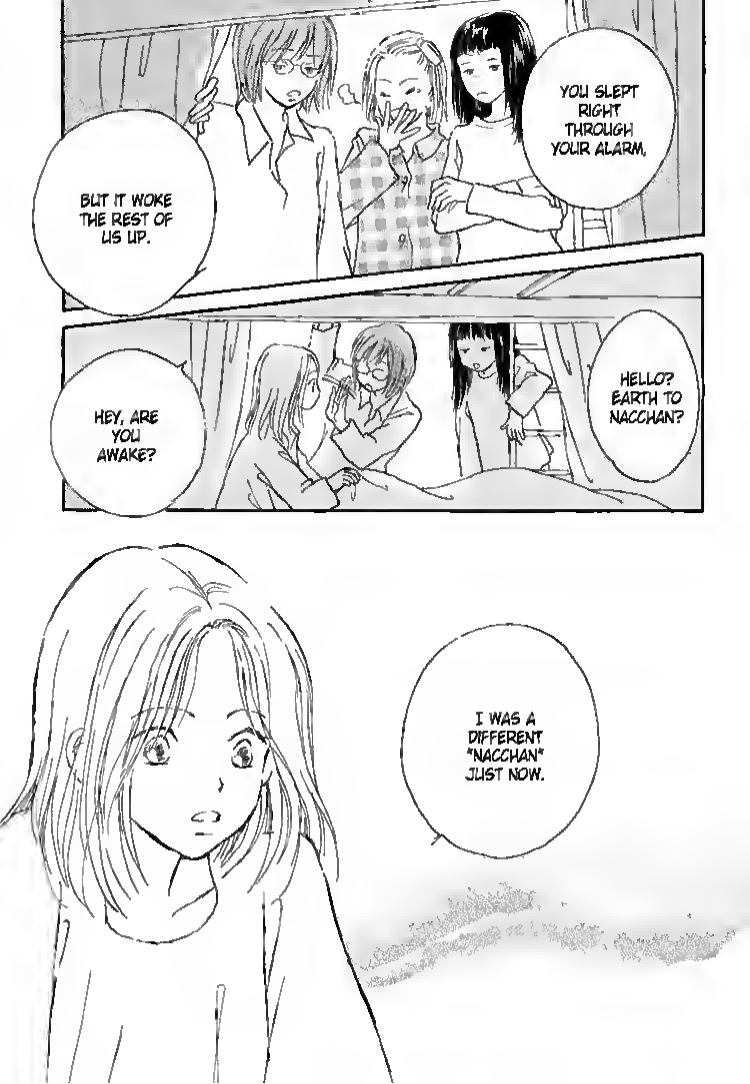
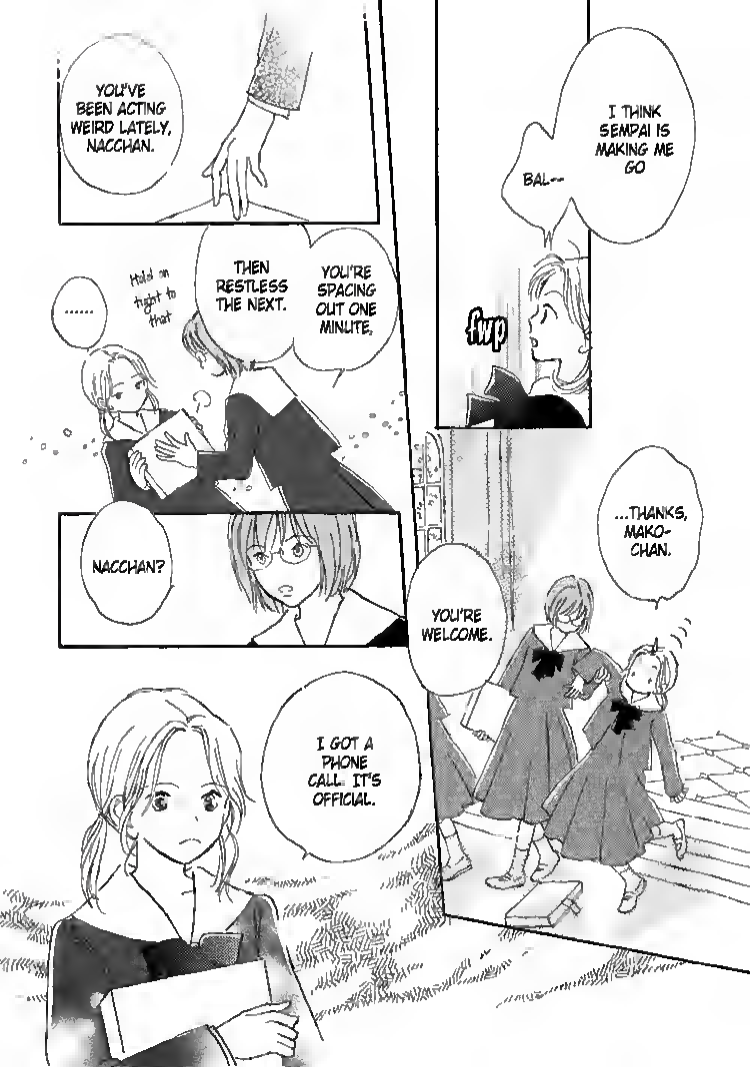

CHAN!
rrrrrrrrrb
NACCHAN!
ring
NACCHAN!


brrr
NACCHAN!!
...MMM.
rrrring!!
smack!
HEY!! C'MON, NACCHAN!!
fwip


HEY, ARE YOU AWAKE?
HELLO? EARTH TO NACCHAN?
BUT IT WOKE THE REST OF US UP.
YOU SLEPT RIGHT THROUGH YOUR ALARM,
I WAS A DIFFERENT "NACCHAN" JUST NOW.

Puzzle

MORNING.
MORNING.
MOR-NING!
gasp
bap!
MORNING, FIVEHEAD-CHAN!
URK!
Morning, Harey!
Geez, it's too early in the morning for this...
I WAS TOO SLOW!
Argh!


YOU'VE BEEN ACTING WEIRD LATELY, NACCHAN.
I THINK SEMPAI IS MAKING ME GO BAL--
fwp
YOU'RE SPACING OUT ONE MINUTE,
THEN RESTLESS THE NEXT.
Hold on tight to that
.....
NACCHAN?
...THANKS, MAKO-CHAN.
YOU'RE WELCOME.
I GOT A PHONE CALL. IT'S OFFICIAL.

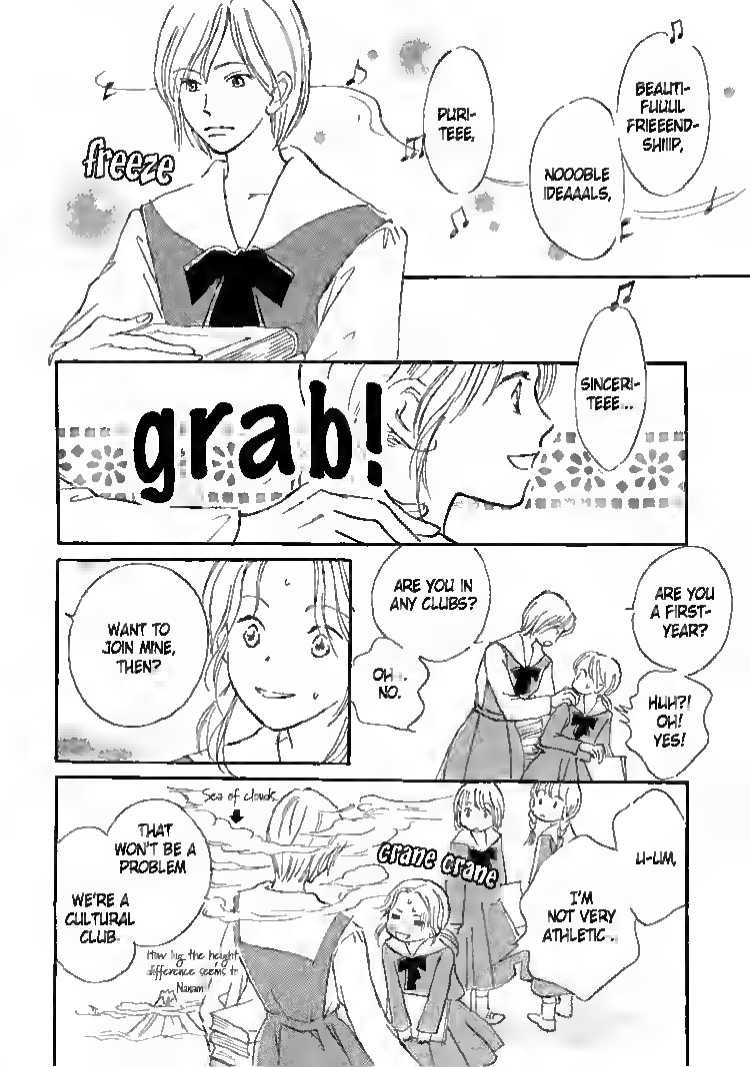
SO YOUR DAD IS DEFINITELY COMING HOME?
THAT'S GREAT!
HIS ASSIGNMENT ABROAD IS OVER, AND HE'LL RECEIVE A PROMOTION WHEN HE RETURNS, CORRECT?
HOHO!
Marvelous news!
...WE'RE NOT A COUPLE OF GOSSIPING HOUSEWIVES, MAKO-CHAN.
HEY, JUST BE GLAD HE'S COMING BACK.
WE ALL KNOW WHAT A DADDY'S GIRL YOU ARE
YOU CRIED A LOT BACK IN JUNIOR HIGH.
She and her dad are a family
DON'T REMIND ME.

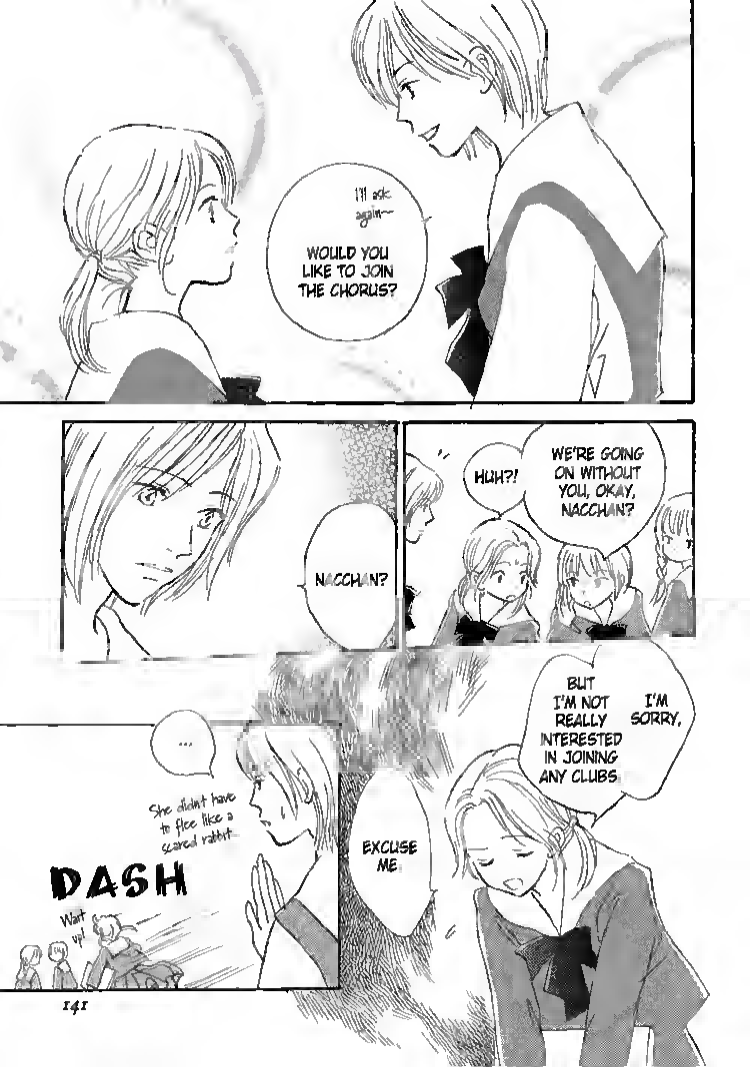
I'LL MISS YOU, NANAMI.
.....
SO YOU'RE LEAVING NEXT SEMESTER?
THE NEW SCHOOL IS FULL THIS SEMESTER, SO I CAN'T GO THERE YET.
YOU COULD JUST STAY HERE UNTIL YOU GRADUATE.
URGH.
Nacchan
Nacchan.

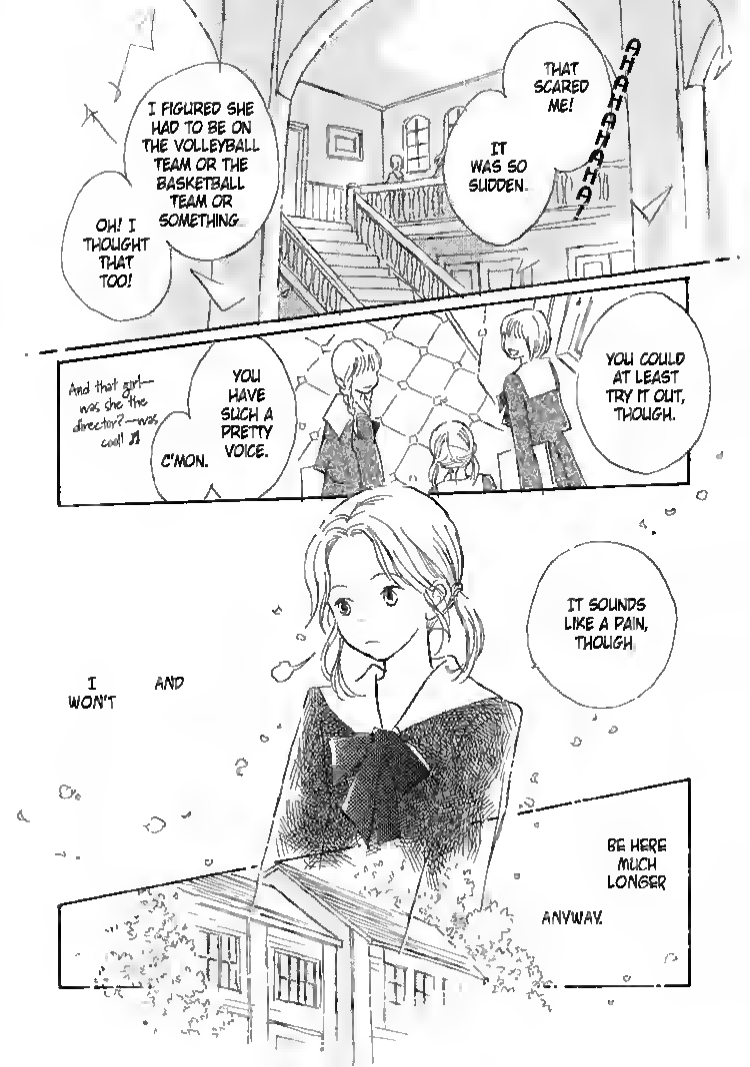
snap
gasp
You'll catch a cold if you sleep out here
ki-chik.
I'M HOME.
WHAT, DID YOU SEE A GHOST OR SOMETHING? THOUGH IT'S A BIT EARLY IN THE DAY FOR THAT.
WELL, ACTUALLY...
Hehe.
HUH?
HMM?

I THINK MAYBE IT WAS SOMEBODY WHO USED TO LIVE HERE.
IT WAS LIKE OUR TWO POINTS IN TIME CAME TOGETHER.
OH!
YOU MENTIONED THAT BEFORE.
I'M HOME!
tmp
tmp
WELCOME HOME
MAN, I'M STARVING!
I HAVE A BEAN-PASTE BUN. IT'S FROM YESTERDAY, THOUGH. DO YOU STILL WANT IT?
It's from the Kurumi Bakery
OOH! CHUNKY STYLE WITH CREAM!
Thanks!
NANAMI
The
?
Strange Stories Club?
YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO LOOK UP THE GIRL WHO USED TO LIVE HERE,
in the student records or something,
BUT THAT PAMPHLET
WOULD BE A MORE SOPHISTICATED WAY OF GOING ABOUT IT

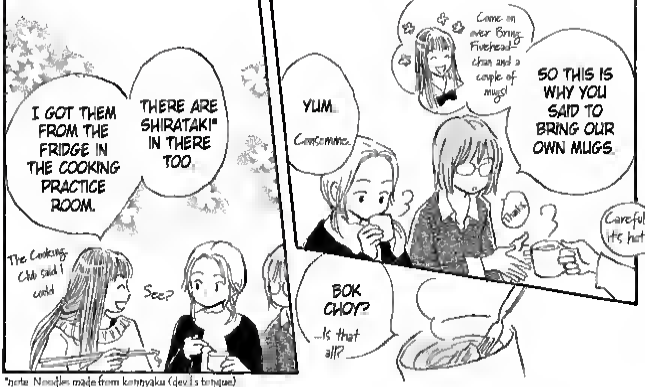
IT'S ABOUT HOW FUN IT CAN BE TO EXPLORE MYSTERIOUS PHENOMENA.
READ IT. IT'S INTERESTING.
I'M NOT REALLY INTO THAT STUFF.
I SEE.
I'll read it!
Sorry.
SAEKI-SAN,
WOULD YOU TAKE THESE TO THE PREP ROOM FOR ME?
ALL RIGHT.
rush
rush
OH, THE JUNIOR HIGH HAS A DIFFERENT SCHOOL SONG?
IT'S SIMILAR TO OURS, THOUGH.
HOW DOES IT GO?
Sing it for me!
chatter
chatter
chatter


freeze
PURI-TEEE,
NOOOBLE IDEAAALS,
BEAUTI-FUUUL FRIEEEND-SHIIIP,
grab!
SINCERI-TEEE...
WANT TO JOIN MINE, THEN?
ARE YOU IN ANY CLUBS?
OH. NO.
ARE YOU A FIRST-YEAR?
HUH?! OH! YES!
Sea of clouds
THAT WON'T BE A PROBLEM
WE'RE A CULTURAL CLUB.
How big the height difference seems to Nanami
crane crane
U-UM,
I'M NOT VERY ATHLETIC.


I'll ask again—
WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN THE CHORUS?
NACCHAN?
HUH?!
WE'RE GOING ON WITHOUT YOU, OKAY, NACCHAN?
I'M SORRY, BUT I'M NOT REALLY INTERESTED IN JOINING ANY CLUBS.
EXCUSE ME.
...
She didn't have to flee like a scared rabbit.
DASH
Wait up!

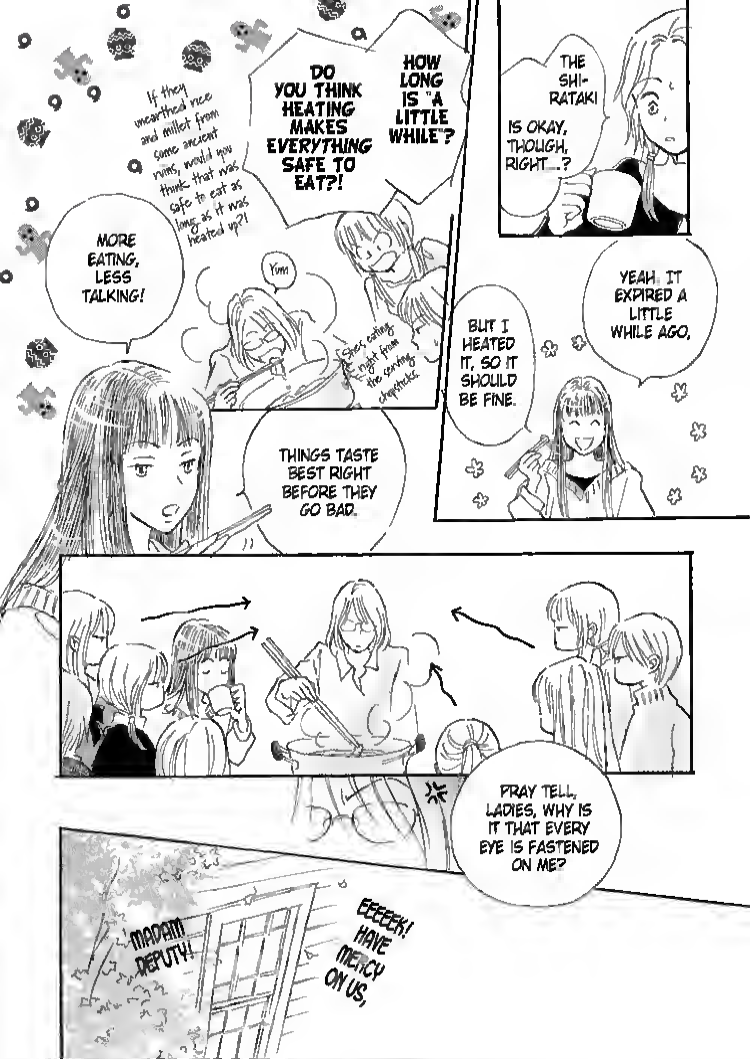

I FIGURED SHE HAD TO BE ON THE VOLLEYBALL TEAM OR THE BASKETBALL TEAM OR SOMETHING.
OH! I THOUGHT THAT TOO!
THAT SCARED ME!
IT WAS SO SUDDEN.
AHAHAHAHA?
And that girl—was she the director?—was cool! ♫
C'MON.
YOU HAVE SUCH A PRETTY VOICE.
YOU COULD AT LEAST TRY IT OUT, THOUGH.
IT SOUNDS LIKE A PAIN, THOUGH.
I WON'T
AND
BE HERE MUCH LONGER
ANYWAY.

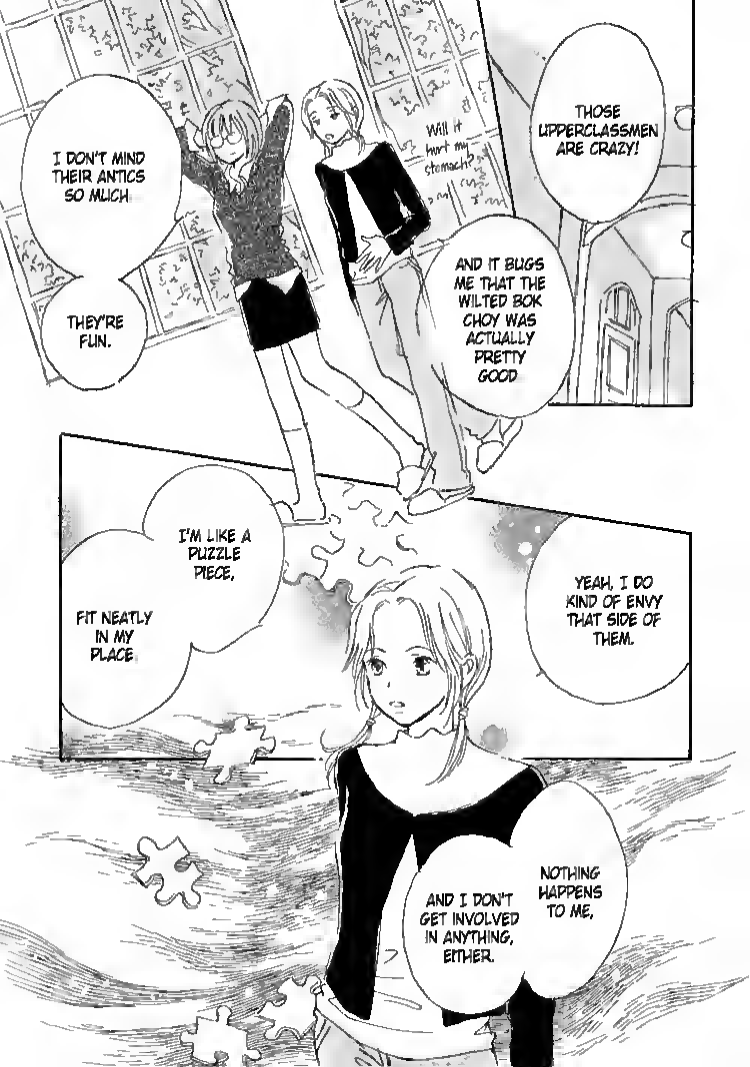
knock knock
Come in!
chk
EXCUSE US!
WHOA!
COME ON IN!
packed
simmer
simmer
HAVE A SEAT WHEREVER YOU CAN FIND ONE!



*note: Noodles made from konnyaku (devil's tongue)

HOT PLATES AREN'T ALLOWED IN THE DORMS!!
TURN IT OFF IMMEDIATELY!!
YES, MA'AM!
WELL, SCOOT OVER.
Thow
?
I'LL HELP YOU DISPOSE OF THE EVIDENCE ♫
Wish I had a beer...
Hey, no fair!
HM?
WAS THIS THE WILTING BOK CHOY THAT WAS IN THE ART ROOM FOR PEOPLE TO SKETCH...?
The one nobody was taking care of...?
YUP, THAT'S THE ONE
What?!


THE SHI-RATAKI IS OKAY, THOUGH, RIGHT...?
YEAH. IT EXPIRED A LITTLE WHILE AGO,
BUT I HEATED IT, SO IT SHOULD BE FINE.
HOW LONG IS "A LITTLE WHILE"?
DO YOU THINK HEATING MAKES EVERYTHING SAFE TO EAT?!
If they unearthed rice and millet from some ancient ruins, would you think that was safe to eat as long as it was heated up?!
Yum
Spices cutting right from the carving chopsticks.
MORE EATING, LESS TALKING!
THINGS TASTE BEST RIGHT BEFORE THEY GO BAD.
PRAY TELL, LADIES, WHY IS IT THAT EVERY EYE IS FASTENED ON ME?
EEEEEK! HAVE MERCY ON US,
MADAM DEPUTY!

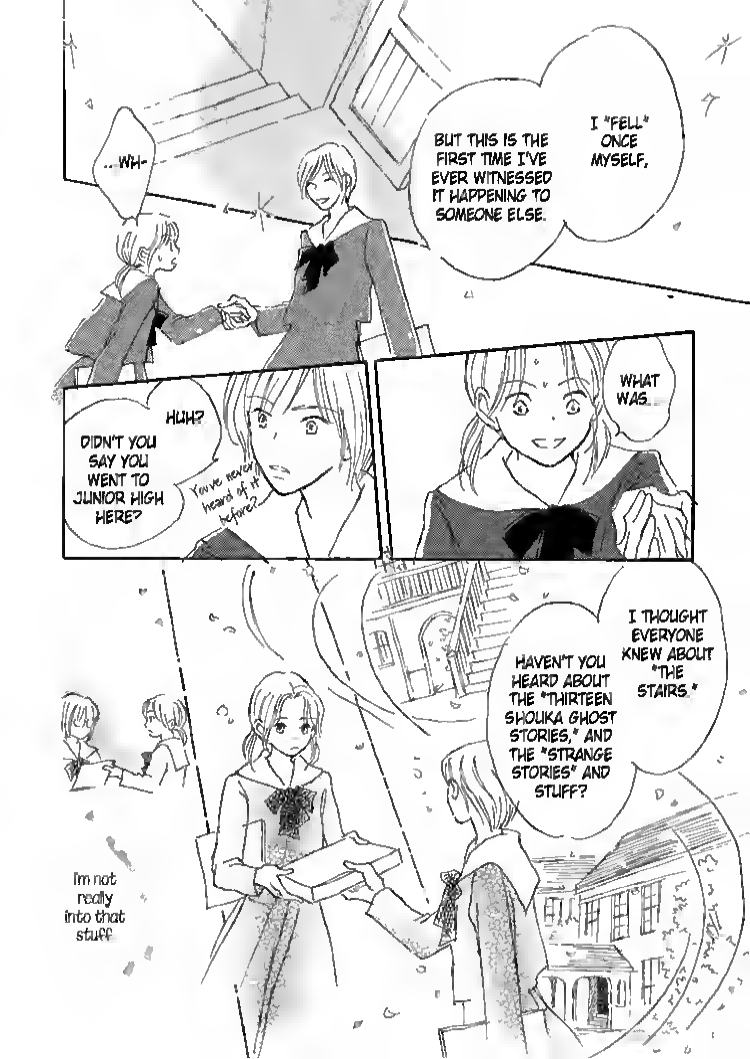

THOSE UPPERCLASSMEN ARE CRAZY!
AND IT BUGS ME THAT THE WILTED BOK CHOY WAS ACTUALLY PRETTY GOOD
Will it hurt my stomach?
I DON'T MIND THEIR ANTICS SO MUCH.
THEY'RE FUN.
YEAH, I DO KIND OF ENVY THAT SIDE OF THEM.
I'M LIKE A PUZZLE PIECE,
FIT NEATLY IN MY PLACE.
NOTHING HAPPENS TO ME,
AND I DON'T GET INVOLVED IN ANYTHING, EITHER.

LIKE YOU PREFER TO BE NEATLY IN YOUR PLACE.
IT LOOKS TO ME
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT,
WREAKING HAVOC? GEEZ
BUT YOU COULD START WREAKING SOME HAVOC NOW, IF YOU LIKE?
MENTALITY ABOUT BEING HERE.
I'VE HAD AN "I JUST HAVE TO HANG ON UNTIL DAD GETS BACK"
THIS WHOLE TIME,
I'VE BEEN ACTING LIKE I'M JUST VISITING.
Sea of clouds
rush rush
Oh! IT'S THAT CLOUD GIRL.

WATCH YOUR STEP.
Backing away
HI.
slip
THERE'S A--

OWWW.
thud!
.....
ARE YOU OKAY?
DID YOU FALL DOWN THE STAIRS TOO?
WHOA, YOUR ANKLE IS ALL SWOLLEN!
THAT'S GOTTA HURT!

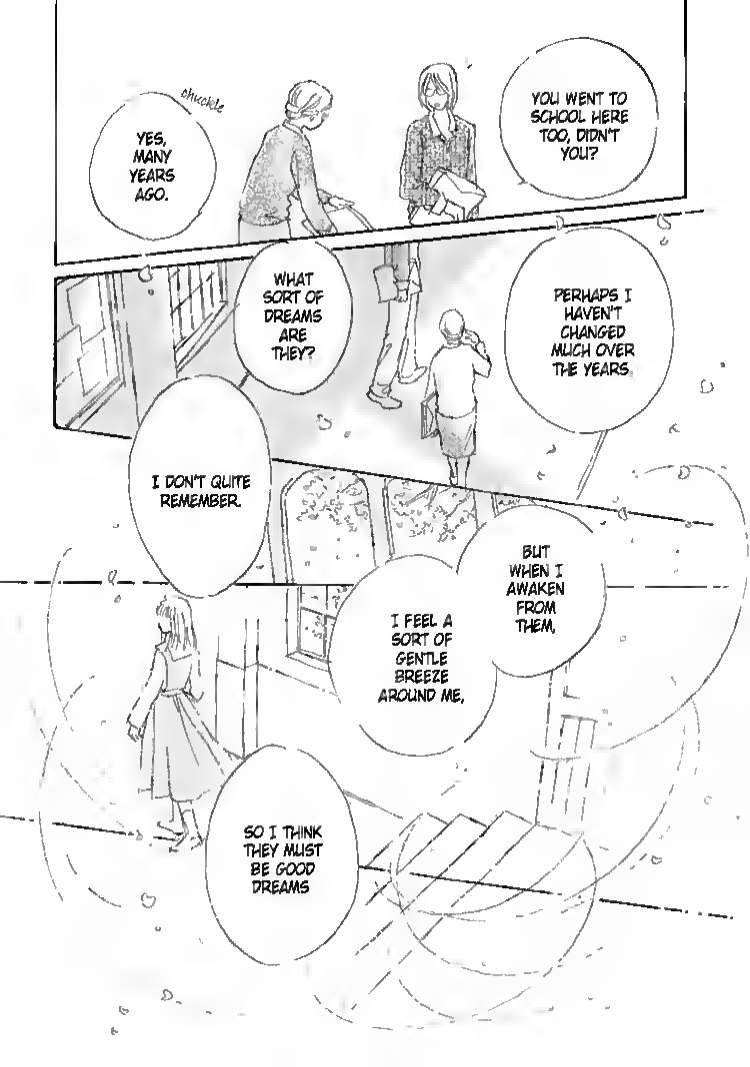
Oomph!
HOLD ON TIGHT
Is this your notebook?
No
HERE, CLIMB ON!
gallant.
tmp
tmp
tmp
tmp
tmp
creak.
WELCOME BACK.


...WH-
BUT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER WITNESSED IT HAPPENING TO SOMEONE ELSE.
I "FELL" ONCE MYSELF.
WHAT WAS...
HUH?
DIDN'T YOU SAY YOU WENT TO JUNIOR HIGH HERE?
You've never heard of it before?
I THOUGHT EVERYONE KNEW ABOUT "THE STAIRS."
HAVEN'T YOU HEARD ABOUT THE "THIRTEEN SHOUKA GHOST STORIES," AND THE "STRANGE STORIES" AND STUFF?
I'm not really into that stuff.

I don't get involved in anything.
It looks to me like you prefer to be neatly in your place.
CAREFUL ON THE STAIRS
See you!
.. UM--
But you could start wreaking some havoc now, if you like?
I'M TRANSFERRING AT THE END OF THE SEMESTER.
SO I'D ONLY BE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE FOR A LITTLE WHILE, BUT...
BUT...

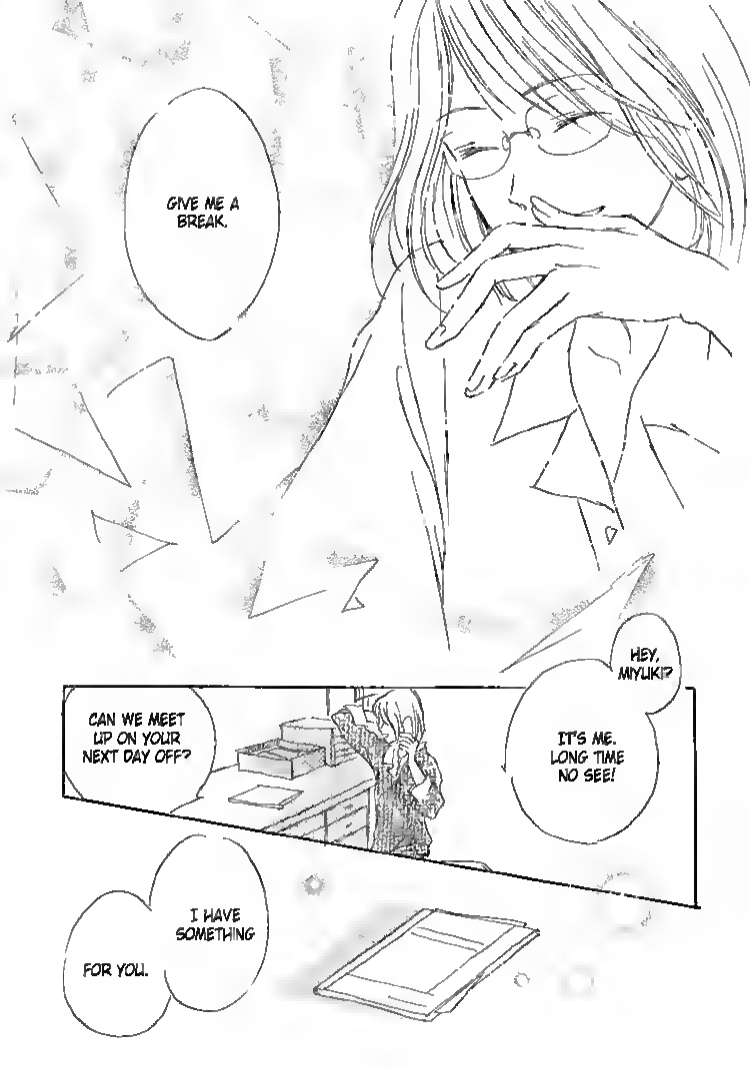
MAY I JOIN THE CHORUS?
OF COURSE!
THE CULTURAL FESTIVAL IS COMING UP, SO I HOPE YOU'RE READY TO PUT YOUR NOSE TO THE GRINDSTONE.
I'M ON MY WAY TO REHEARSAL RIGHT NOW. WANT TO COME?
YES!
OH, BUT I SHOULD GO DROP THIS OFF FIRST.

SENSEI
SAKAI-SENSEI.
blink
THE MEETING'S ABOUT TO START.
DID YOU HAVE A NICE DREAM?
OH, DEAR! DID I NOD OFF?
ju
mp
IT'S EMBARRASSING TO ADMIT THIS,
GIVEN MY AGE,
BUT ONCE IN A WHILE, I STILL DREAM OF THE DAYS WHEN I WORE A SCHOOL UNIFORM.
.....

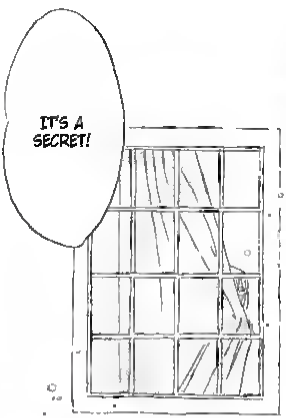

YOU WENT TO SCHOOL HERE TOO, DIDN'T YOU?
chuckle
YES, MANY YEARS AGO.
PERHAPS I HAVEN'T CHANGED MUCH OVER THE YEARS.
WHAT SORT OF DREAMS ARE THEY?
I DON'T QUITE REMEMBER.
BUT WHEN I AWAKEN FROM THEM,
I FEEL A SORT OF GENTLE BREEZE AROUND ME,
SO I THINK THEY MUST BE GOOD DREAMS

IT'S ABOUT THIS BIG. IT'S GOT A PINK CHECKERED PATTERN ON IT.
rustle rustle
PINK? I DON'T THINK IT'S IN HERE.
HM?
THERE IT IS! IT'S RIGHT UNDER THAT NOTEBOOK
THAT ONE, RIGHT THERE!
MIYUKI
OH, THANK GOODNESS!
SIGN HERE, PLEASE
Crunch
TMP

flip
And what are these teeth marks on it? Are they from a monkey?!
AND WHY NOW?!
WHAT THE-- HOW DID IT TURN UP HERE?
Lost and Found
ARGH!
.. GEEZ.


GIVE ME A BREAK.
HEY, MYUKI?
IT'S ME. LONG TIME NO SEE!
CAN WE MEET UP ON YOUR NEXT DAY OFF?
I HAVE SOMETHING FOR YOU.

NOPE, I'M NOT TELLING!
WELL, YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE.
HM?


IT'S A SECRET!

END

The Secret Stairs

chapter 13

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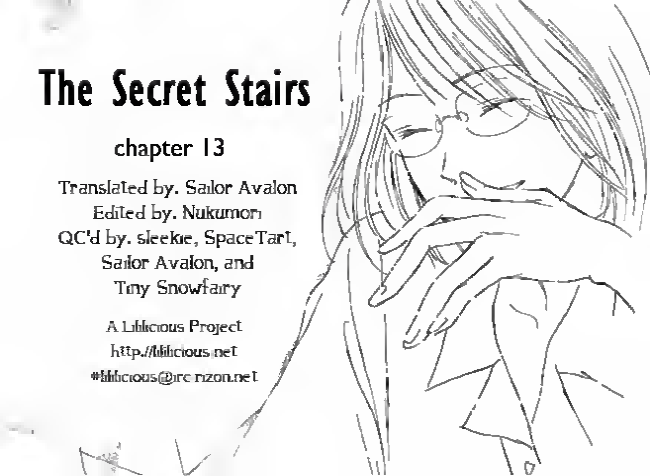


A Distant Promise

rustle
glance

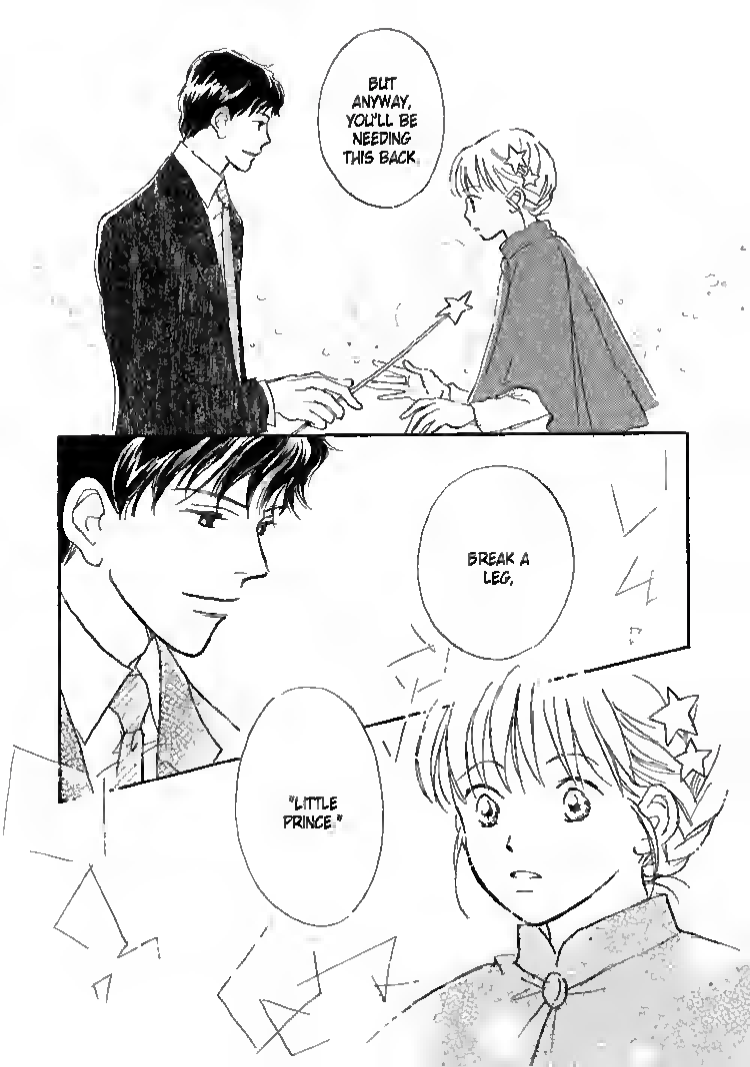
ACK!
fwip
Wham!!
EEP!

SORRY I BUMPED INTO YOU.
YES.
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
A-
drop
gasp
...UM...
ARE YOU VISITING THE SCHOOL?
..HUH?
OH.
YES.
FOR THE FOUNDER'S DAY FESTIVAL...
HUH?

—YES, I THINK SO.
I'VE LOST MY WAY.
Hello.
ARE YOU LOST?
THOUGH I'M USED TO GETTING LOST AND ENDING UP IN STRANGE PLACES, IT'S BEEN HAPPENING TO ME SINCE I WAS A KID.
?
YOU'RE LOOKING FOR THE AUDITORIUM, CORRECT?

YOU GO THAT WAY
AND MAKE A LEFT AT THE END OF THE HALL,
THEN A RIGHT AROUND THE NEXT CORNER, AND YOU'LL BE AT THE FRONT DOOR OF THE AUDITORIUM.
bow
GOOD-BYE
...THANKS.
WAIT A MINUTE!
YOU FORGOT THIS!

Crunch
OH, CRAP...
...IT'S NOT DAMAGED.
Phew
DID IT FALL OUT WHEN WE BUMPED INTO EACH OTHER?
I'M SORRY!
NO, IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT.
I WAS THE ONE WHO DROPPED IT AND THEN STEPPED ON IT.


BUT ANYWAY, YOU'LL BE NEEDING THIS BACK.
BREAK A LEG,
"LITTLE PRINCE."

THANK YOU.

The ring...
tmp
tmp

SENSEI?

I WAS WAITING FOR SOMEONE.
IS SOMETHING THE MATTER?
THE CEREMONY IS ABOUT TO START.
AN ALUMNA.
I TAKE IT?
YES.

GIRLS, GIRLS!
THAT'S ENOUGH OF THAT! YOU SHOULD BE IN THE AUDITORIUM.
YES, MA'AM!
Kyahahahaha!
PARDON?
WE FIRST MET HERE, ACTUALLY.
IF YOU DON'T MAKE IT IN TIME,
THERE ARE SOME EXTRA SEATS BEHIND THE STAFF AREA.
OH, THE PRINCESS HAS FINALLY ARRIVED.
tmp
tmp

NATSU!!
END

☆Yoshida-san's website
Yoshida Yukari's Medieval Fantasy World http://www.asahi-net.or.jp/~YQ5Y-YSD/

☆Konno's website
Sally Gardens http://homepage3.nifty.com/sallygardens/
(You can read Yoshida-san's short story in the "Strange Stories Club" section)

The Secret Stairs

chapter 14

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